DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 974 EA 014 965

AUTHOR Neufeld, Barbara
TITLE Working in High Schools: Inside Views of the Organization.
INSTITUTION Huron Inst., Cambridge, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Mar 80
CONTRACT 400-78-0045
NOTE 195p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Bureaucracy; Curriculum Development; *Decision Making; Elective Courses; High Schools; Principals; *School Organization; School Surveys; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Role; Teaching Conditions; *Teaching Load
IDENTIFIERS *Rules and Regulations

ABSTRACT

To complement a national survey called "High School '77," researchers in 1978-79 conducted indepth field studies of the organization of five high schools. School bureaucracy and procedures and their relationship to instruction, teachers, and school programs were analyzed. The five schools were drawn from village, suburban, urban, and central-city settings, and data were gathered through site visits, document analysis, and open-ended interviews with 25-30 people (administrators, teachers, counselors, and students) in each school. The researchers examined (1) the control of teacher assignment to particular courses and the role of administrators, teachers, and departments in making the decisions; (2) the factors affecting course options, including the pressures for diversity or basics; (3) rules and regulations covering teachers' work, such as textbook selection, lesson plans, curriculum guides, and meetings and procedures; and (4) the use to which the schools put teacher evaluations. Among the study's conclusions are that teacher participation in instructional decision-making is widespread in many school departments, that the schools' course options emphasized basics, and that school bureaucracies are sensitive to many pressures. (RW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

The Huron Institute

ED220974

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

WORKING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Inside Views of the Organization

Barbara Neufeld

Project Director
Eleanor Farrar

March 1980

EA 011 965

THE HURON INSTITUTE, 123 MOUNT AUBURN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

Final Report

WORKING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Inside Views of the Organization

By

Barbara Neufeld

Project Director
Eleanor Farrar

March 1980

The Huron Institute
123 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

This report is prepared for the National Institute of Education pursuant to Contract #400-78-0045. It expresses the views of the author, and is not to be quoted or excerpted without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The report that follows would not have been possible without the participation of 136 administrators, teachers, counselors, and students. Each one took seriously our effort to understand high school organization from their point of view, and shared with us their time, insights and dilemmas. I thank each and every one for contributing so much of themselves to this study.

I also thank David Cohen for providing me with the opportunity to pursue this study, for his comments on earlier drafts, and for his unfailing confidence.

My very special thanks go to Eleanor Farrar for her consistent participation, support and encouragement with both the field work and the analysis of the data.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Preface

I INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1
Scope of the Study 3
Framework for Analysis 5
Organization of the Report 10

II THE SCHOOLS 15

Village High School 15
Suburban High School 18
Urban High School 21
City High School 25
Central High School 27
Overview 29

III CONTROL OF TEACHERS' ASSIGNMENT 30

Traditions as a Source of Control 32
Administrative Authority 35
Departmental Status: The Foreign Language Departments 37
Urban High School's English Department: A Variation 39
The External Environment: Controls Originating Outside of the School Building 41
Recruiting the Students 44
The Influence of Student Achievement on Teacher Assignment . . . 48

Methods of Sorting Students 49

Summary 55

IV COURSE OPTIONS

Responding to Changing Ideas About Instruction 59
School Size 68
Definitions of the Schools 71
Individual Influences on Course Options 75
Integrating New Courses 77
Summary 78

V RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR TEACHERS' WORK 83

Text Selection 88

Schools with State Level Adoption Procedures 88

The Process of Selecting Texts 89
Working with the System 91
Departmental Status and Text Availability 98

Overview 101
Schools Without Adoption Procedures 102

Pressures to Control Text Selection 105

Overview 107
Summary 108

Lesson Plans 110

Overview: Lesson Plans 115

Curriculum Guides 115

Student Course Changes 117
Tests 119
The Norm of Working Together 121
Overview 122

Rules, Meetings and Procedures 123

Rules for Teachers 125
Meetings 127
Enforcing Attendance Rules for Students 134
Summary 140

VI TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS 142

Descriptions of the Evaluation 144

History of Classroom Observation Systems 144
The Process of Evaluation 147
Goal Setting Systems 153

Locating Teachers with Instructional Problems 160
Evaluation as Documentation 163
Summary 166

VII CONCLUSION 169

APPENDIX I: Design of the Study 174

REFERENCES 187

PREFACE

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, rhetoric resounded with the firm assurance that we understood high schools. They were bureaucracies: lethargic, intransigent, malevolent institutions founded on race and class prejudices. Bureaucratic organization defined the power relations between the school and the community and was purported to be a primary cause of the schools' inability to meet the needs of any but the most ordinary pupils. Bureaucracy was also to blame for the presumed lack of diversity in programs and options for students.

Yet even when the rhetoric was loudest, organizational research did not support the belief that schools were bureaucratic. Much of this research was designed to consider various facets of life in schools presumed to be bureaucratic. There was research on organizational issues, such as roles, curriculum, satisfaction, discipline, control, participation, and a variety of crises and innovations. There was little work that attempted to draw these elements together to develop a complex description of the organization; it was assumed that the organization's structure was known. However, much of this research produced data that were unexpected and unexplained by bureaucratic theory. The accumulation of evidence contradicting the tenets of bureaucratic theory led researchers to question their understanding of high school organization.

Out of this questioning and criticizing came a desire for more knowledge which resulted in the National Institute of Education funding a series of descriptive studies of high school organization. The first of these, reported as High School '77, was a survey of high school principals. It provided current, baseline organizational data on a large sample of

high schools from the perspective of the principal. The analysis of that data supported the idea that bureaucracy is an inadequate description of high schools.

This report represents a continuing research effort in the series: an in-depth field study of the organization of a small sample of high schools. It is an effort to know high school organization from the multiple perspectives of those inside: administrators, teachers, counselors, and students. It is an attempt to describe how they perceive and organize their lives in high schools. And it is another look at the issue of program and course diversity. By using the multiple perspectives of those in the schools, the study describes influences and controls on teachers' work and on school programs.

Although this study did not focus on precisely the same issues as the NIE survey, and although it used a different methodology, the study was designed to be complementary to High School '77. Together the studies contribute to a growing, increasingly comprehensive picture of high school organization.

INTRODUCTION

Background

'School bureaucracy' has been the definition of a problem more than it has been a description. It connotes a monolith: schools that are inflexible, unable to meet the needs of students, and care most about protecting themselves. It defines the problem with schools as an imbalance of power and suggests, as a remedy, the reorganization of schools to shift power relations between and within the school and community.

While this definition of the problem and the solution flourished during the past decade, there were actions that seemed to suggest a different idea. School systems responded to parental and student pressure by offering a wider array of courses and programs and by increasing parental (and sometimes student) involvement in task forces and committees. In some places, parents participated in curriculum planning and hiring decisions. Teachers, through their organizations, pressed for and achieved greater influence in certain aspects of their working conditions. Were these evidence of a big change in relationships and organizations? Or was our picture of bureaucracy flawed? Increasingly, it is our understanding of the problem--the definition of school organization--that is being questioned, and researchers are asking: How are power and influence distributed in schools? How is work coordinated? Are the schools really bureaucracies?[1]

---

[1]While researchers are focussing on issues of organization, those who are directly involved in schools as clients--parents and students--have refocussed their energy on issues of accountability. The focus on basics and competencies attempts to by-pass the structure and confront the individual teacher directly.

If high schools were bureaucratic, analysis of the survey of high school principals, High School '77 (Abramowitz, et al, 1979), should have revealed a functioning authority hierarchy, many rules, standard operating procedures, limited participation in decision making, and careful evaluation of the core instructional work of teachers. Abramowitz, et al did not find such a system. Instead, their analysis revealed the absence of centralized decision making and the presence instead of widespread participation in decision making. Congruent with this participation system, principals did not see their responsibility as chiefly managerial. Instead, they considered their 'collegial' and community ambassador roles to be equally important. In addition to these structural features, the coordination mechanisms classically assumed to govern bureaucracies turned out to be problematic in high schools. There were few rules for teachers' instructional behavior; evaluation, the most personal of the coordination mechanisms, was not a significant feature of the schools. The authors concluded:

> The results suggest that both structure and coordination exist in high schools, but function in quite a different fashion from that usually seen in a bureaucracy. Structure in a bureaucratic system is noticeable and controlling. In the schools we surveyed, structure seems to exhibit (rather than exercise) control . . . .
>
> In conclusion, our initial findings indicate that 'bureaucracy' may not be the most accurate description of the high school as an organization. Because high schools appear to lack the characteristics that bureaucracies are suppose to have, the diagnosis of how high schools failed to meet the needs of students should be reassessed . . . . Another model may be more appropriate in explaining high school organization and management. (pp. 36-37)

Abramowitz, et al suggest that the appropriate alternative organizational model is one that focuses our attention on the lack of formal

organizational coordination and control and conceives of schools as loosely coupled systems: organizations made up of semi-autonomous parts that interact but retain their own identity. This model suggests that changes in one part of the school will have little effect on changes in other parts due to their lack of interdependence. While rigidity and lack of responsiveness have been evidences of a bureaucracy gone bad, the loose coupling model suggests that lack of responsiveness is not a malfunction, but the very essence of the system itself.

In addition to raising interesting questions about the coordination and control of work in high schools, the NIE survey also addressed the issue of diversity. The survey of principals revealed that high schools offer a wider array of courses, programs, and graduation options than critics have alleged. The authors suggest that this may create tension within the schools. Principals report new attention to basic skills; we know that funding is tight, and enrollment is declining. Yet there is still a press toward comprehensiveness and diversity. Abramowitz, et al wonder: How do the schools cope with these competing pressures? How do they emphasize basics and diversity?

Scope of the Study

This study was designed to pursue some of the issues raised in High School '77 by addressing the following questions.

1. Are the long-standing bureaucratic structures and mechanisms fulfilling their formal purposes in high schools?[2]

2. If the bureaucratic structures and mechanisms do not coordinate and control the core instructional work of high schools, are there other mechanisms that do?

[2]We asume that if the formal structures had no purpose, they would atrophy. On the contrary, rules, procedures, and evaluations seem to be proliferating.

3. How are the schools dealing with the competing demands of diversity and basics?

Through site visits, intensive interviewing, and document study in five high schools, we have investigated issues of organizational control and coordination, and issues of program diversity. Our purpose in addressing these questions has been twofold. First, we wanted to generate descriptions of high school organization from a variety of perspectives in order to inform the interpretation of the survey results and our three questions in particular. For example, we wanted to know whether teachers agreed with principals in saying that they participated in decision making, and whether what they said depended on the department with which they were associated. Second, we wanted to determine whether a different methodology, intensive open-ended interviewing, would turn up evidence similar to, or different from, that generated by the survey. We wanted to know whether the description of the schools generated by the survey was robust when compared with that generated by site visits and interviews. We were interested, then, not only in determining, for example, whether the principal's views were similar to those of other participants, but also whether principals revealed the same widespread participation and decision-making authority when interviewed, as they did when filling out a survey. This purpose shaped the perspective with which we approached the schools and analyzed the data.[3]

---

[3]It is difficult to separate the effects of methodology from the effects of the different participant views in this study. Therefore, the methodological questions would be answered best by comparing these field studies with the more recently completed NIE survey of many school participants. In addition, the small sample size of this study, makes comparisons based on methodology uncertain. However, given the limitations mentioned, the potential for methodological comparisons is important and did figure in the decision to design this study.

Framework for Analysis

Our data will suggest a paradox: high schools are more controlled than recent studies suggest, yet they are responsive. How can this be? Earlier interpretations of school organization concluded that schools were non-responsive because they were bureaucratic. More recent interpretations conclude that they may be more responsive because they are not bureaucratic. Neither of these alternatives is convincing. They seem to skirt around control, responsiveness, and their relation to the formal structure of the schools. We suggest that the predominant focus on formal structure has been too narrow. It has led us to think of schools as organizations apart from the larger society in which they exist, and to consider the people in them as passive respondents. It has assumed that the formal organization would act in a coercive way to shape the behavior of those who work within it. It has neglected the way in which teachers are active participants in the formal organization, not through coercion, but through acceptance and agreement with the form and processes of the schools.

We suggest that it is profitable to think of the bureaucratic structure of high schools, then, not as a coercive force, but as a setting or framework within which participants interact and create their working relationships. By "setting," we mean more than the physical space of the school or the formal authority hierarchy. We mean, in addition, the multiple cultural definitions of school that give conceptual meaning to the organization. These can include, for example, agreement that students should take courses, that teachers should select texts, that attendance is required, and that the teacher is in a superior position of authority to the student as is the principal to the teacher. They are the characteristics and relationships we imagine when we think of schools. These agree-

ments are reflected in the formal organization, but they are not precisely caused by it. We do not need to have them imposed by the formal structure; they are part of our cultural definition of school.

If we think of schools in this way, as cultural institutions, rather than as organizations, then we would expect the formal structure to have a profound controlling and coordinating role. But we would not expect the structure to control in overt, obvious ways; we would expect it to operate by setting the culturally defined boundaries within which people understand and make sense of their work. As cultural institutions, schools would not need a great many formal rules to insure that participants behave in expected ways; shared cultural definitions of school would promote that appropriate behavior. Schools, then, would be similar not because of the presence of formal rules, but because, as Blumer (1969) says, people have learned common understandings of definitions of the situation called "school." This interpretation does not make people passive objects in the organization; it makes them active, interpreting individuals who make sense of their work within a cultural institution with a particular formal structure.

Further, high schools seen in this context are, in many respects, responsive. If one examines the fidelity with which a particular innovation is implemented, responsiveness may look weak. But if one thinks of larger cultural definitions of what students need from schools, then schools seem more responsive. For example, one can consider the current increase in graduation requirements as an instance in which schools are responsive to society's demand for better educated students. Similarly, one can consider the loosening of graduation requirements in past years as responsive to society's beliefs that students should have the oppor-

tunity to shape their own education. We are suggesting that shifts and trends in the larger society are often reflected in the formal organization of the high school. And we are also suggesting that they may enter schools in subtle ways that reflect teachers' active participation. We present an example from our data to suggest the complexity of these interactions.

During the late 60s and early 70s when "relevance" meant teaching what students liked, schools offered a wide variety of courses and de-emphasized standardization. Relevance was measured by whether students were in the classroom rather than in the hallways. Today, the national mood has shifted and the earlier definition of relevance has been replaced by conceptions of utility. Now schoolpeople suggest that students need basic skills, as defined by adults, that will be relevant to their future lives. No longer are teachers expected to cater to youthful, fleeting, emotional, and irrelevant student interests.

This shift in emphasis was apparent in all of the schools in our sample. In all the schools, the English departments were working to coordinate their curriculum in some way to reflect this current concern. However, it would be a mistake to infer that administrators are successfully implementing their centrally derived curriculum mandates. The new definitions of what students need have not developed in individual central offices around the country. They have been defined in the larger society of which the schools are a part. These concerns are reflected in myriad central offices, but they seem not to have originated there. Further, in the school where teachers have gone the farthest in restructuring their curriculum to reflect a need for basics, they are proud to note that the initiative for these changes came from within the school. Thus, the idea that the English curriculum should change in a certain way cannot be categorized

as a bureaucratic or even a professional decision. It is a result of broader conversations and debates about youth, schooling, equality, and preparation for life. To seek explanations, then, for curriculum coordination and control in the formal structure or, on the other hand, to be surprised that they don't exist is to ignore the important, although perhaps subtle, relationships between what teachers do in schools and what is happening in the larger society.

We have not researched the intricate patterns that involve schools and the larger society, but we have always kept them in mind when considering our data. This has helped us to treat all of the people in schools as full participants in both their school culture and the larger culture. Thinking of curriculum changes as a part of societal changes helps us to view a variety of control issues as interactive between the school and the community. People in the schools are participants in the larger culture, and they reflect and respond to shifts in opinion. These shifts can have serious consequences for what goes on in schools, and they help us understand why control and coordination might not be obvious. They also suggest that the connection between the nature of control (the teachers' acceptance of the culture's ideas about schooling) and the potential for responsiveness is tight.

Adopting this perspective, however, does not mean that we dismiss the formal structure of the school as a direct, potent source of control and coordination; it certainly can have that function. Administrators do require teachers to conform to directives or rules that shape their work and with which they might not agree. School systems, at times, do adopt programs without teacher support. But we want to broaden our understanding of the formal structure to include more than these events, and we want to

add other significant mechanisms that have been under-emphasized. One of these we have already mentioned: the teachers' acceptance of the formal structure of the school as legitimate. This acceptance means that much coordination and control is internalized and, therefore, unobtrusive.

In addition, teachers have evolved ideas about what is important to them about work in schools. These ideas tend to focus on interpersonal relationships, rather than on dimensions of the technology of teaching (Lortie, 1975), and include such diverse matters as the proper role of the principal and guidance counselor, and whether students should be in homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. Since they reflect teachers' beliefs and feelings, they lend an emotional quality to the organization of the schools and have much to do with feelings of satisfaction. Finally, there are environmental factors that influence school organization. Declining enrollment, for example, is not an attempt to control schools, and yet it has a direct effect on what the schools can do. The presence of the privately developed, non-mandated Advanced Placement examinations also has an effect on what is taught in schools.

Our intent in conceptualizing school organization in this way is to create a multi-faceted account of control and coordination of teachers' work in high schools. This account will broaden our understanding of school organization and will also point out the ways in which the pattern of control is responsive to the concerns of the larger community. In our presentation of the research findings, then, we have paid careful attention both to the formal structure and to these other features of school organization. Although we cannot, in this descriptive report, evaluate the relative importance of the various bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic control mechanisms, we suggest that awareness of the complexity of school organi-

zation is the first step toward such an assessment.

Broadly speaking then, we have investigated patterns of authority and decision-making power for teachers, students, and administrators. We have studied ways in which teachers and students control and influence their work, and we have used these patterns of participation, influence, and power to develop conceptions of organizational control and coordination. Finally, we have compared our findings, developed by a field work methodology, with those developed through the use of a pencil and paper survey.

Organization of the Report

This is a small study, but the issues that we researched are complex, and the methodology produces copious data that are rich in detail. This led us to the question of how to present the findings. One the one hand, we wanted to avoid condensing the data so that the subtleties of different perspectives would be lost in an attempt to contrast and compare across broad conceptual issues. We wrestled with presenting the data on a school-by-school basis that would preserve the integrity of each organization, or on an issue-by-issue basis that might fragment each school but permit more comparisons and contrasts. We have opted for this second choice, deciding that there is more to be learned about high school organization across schools when our attention is focussed on structure, control, and coordination. In addition, the question of how schools are dealing with the competing demands of diversity and basics lends itself to a cross-site presentation. However, we also feel that it would be difficult to appreciate the findings without a sense of the various contexts within which it was collected. Each high school was unique, not only in its setting, but also in the ways in which the particular issues were expressed by the specific individuals who work in each school. Therefore, we begin with

brief descriptions of each of the schools. They highlight features that were important in each site and help the reader enter the front door to get a sense of the whole school before reading about the specific issues.

Although we researched discrete issues, answers to questions about control and coordination are more apparent when we pay attention to the interrelationships among the issues. For example, although control of textbooks is interesting in and of itself, seen in a pattern along with other attempts to control teachers' work, such as lesson plans and curriculum guides, it becomes more meaningful. Therefore, we have grouped our discrete issues to illuminate the interrelationships that we did find. Having done this, we describe the patterns of participation in decision making that reflect the organizational mechanisms that are at work. Our choice of groups is related to the story we want to tell. It is a story of control and coordination that in large part exists due to society's conception of school. It is a conception that hinges on acceptance of the formal structure: the authority hierarchy, courses, tests, grades, graduation requirements, and compulsory attendance, for example. This structure shapes the issues that will require decisions. These decision arenas are our point of departure. We begin with the relationships between course options and teachers' assignments.

Given the structure of schools, teachers must be assigned to courses. Formally, this task is the responsibility of building administrators. They do not, however, operate with total freedom; there are bureaucratic, non-bureaucratic, and environmental constraints on their actions. Among these is the actual set of courses offered in the school: teachers can only be assigned to those courses that the schools agree should be taught.

Course options, in turn, result from yet another group of understandings, rules, and regulations. We will use teacher assignment as the point from which to view multiple influences on course options, and we will view the effect of course options on teacher assignment. Finally, we will broaden the meaning of assignment to include the students to whom teachers are assigned. Teachers see some students as more desirable than others; students reject some courses that teachers want to teach. These realities have an impact on teachers, and we will describe the ways in which teachers influence student course assignments.

Teacher assignment, considered along with course options and student influences, is a complicated matter. There is more involved than a simple matching of teachers to courses. By grouping the issues as we have done, it will be possible to see this complexity. In addition, considering the factors that influence course options permits us to directly address the question: Are the schools emphasizing diversity and basics? This discussion will conclude the first section of our findings. At the end of the section, teachers and students will be in their classes, and we will be ready to consider the set of rules and regulations that address control and coordination of teachers' classroom work.

Once assignment decisions have been made, the formal organization can have yet another role in controlling teachers' work. Although we did not research classroom behavior, we did consider formal attempts to control that behavior. In this section, we have grouped the bureaucratic rules and procedures for selecting textbooks, writing lesson plans, using curriculum guides, attending meetings, and enforcing rules for students. Each of these mechanisms places the teacher, as an individual, under potential pressure from the organization. Text selection procedures can

conflict with the teachers' belief in their right to teach as they prefer. The requirement to submit lesson plans and to use curriculum guides can further erode the teachers' sense that they are in control of the work that they do. Taken together, this set of rules and regulations has the potential of strictly controlling teachers' work. Recent research suggests, however, that the potential is not realized; that within the schools, these mechanisms are empty formalities designed to satisfy the administrations' need to seem in control. This conclusion is too simplistic and, by grouping the rules and regulations together, we will point out their complexity individually and taken together.

The final section of the findings is limited to the issue of teacher evaluation. We began with an issue that was important but somewhat at a distance from the individual teacher: the issue of teacher assignment. We moved a bit closer to the individual teacher when we considered rules and regulations about instructional and personal behavior. Now we move closer still to a consideration of the systems by which teachers are evaluated. Although evaluation is the most personal of the formal control mechanisms, curiously, it has the least direct influence on teachers' daily work. It happens infrequently, and the criteria on which the teachers are evaluated tend to be general and unrelated to their specific teaching tasks. Evaluation does not seem to be designed to help teachers with specific tasks; it is not equivalent to supervision. Yet evaluation is the formal, bureaucratic basis from which decisions about retention are made. It is designed to be a bureaucratic control on the quality of teachers in the school, and it is a formal record of the schools' opinion about each teacher. We conclude our report of structure, control, and coordination, then, with the bureaucratic structure most closely linked

to the individual teacher.

In the conclusion, we will tie the issues together by suggesting the patterns of participation, control, and coordination that exists within and across the schools. We will return again to the question of responsiveness and the ways in which it is tied to the organization of the schools. We will also compare our findings with those generated by High School '77 and discuss the implications of using different research methodologies for studying control and coordination in high schools.

THE SCHOOLS

Each of these high schools had its own special atmosphere. In spite of the uniformity of the trophy case, the long hallways with individual classrooms, the passing bells, the students in jeans, and the teachers on hall patrol, each school was unique. Before describing their organizational patterns, therefore, we want to briefly recreate that atmosphere. It will help the reader to have a context within which to consider the discrete issues; it will also do justice to each of the schools. Each of the high schools is more than the sum of the organizational parts that we have studied. We want the readers to know them as whole organizations before we describe their separate pieces.

Village High School[1]

Village is a small school built into the side of a mountain and surrounded by pine trees. Single family homes form the residential community served by the school. There is a small village center about a mile from the school, and a collection of hotels that serve an economically properous and growing area: the principal confirmed this impression. As principal for the past nine years, he has seen the area grow in population and in wealth. Many of the students in his school are recent arrivals, their families having rejected the problems of city life in favor of the quiet of this community. These families have earnings that place them well into the upper middle class. There is also a small group

[1]We have changed the names of all high schools to preserve the confidentiality of the site and the participants.

of students who come from families that provide the services that go along with a wealthy community and lucrative tourist industry. The principal described this group as transient, perhaps as a function of their inability to live in the area on the salaries that they earn. Both teachers and students are almost 100% caucasian.

The school is separated by just over an hour's drive from the district office in the city. Teachers and the principal indicate that this physical separation has its virtues: few people from central office visit the school, and they are left alone to structure their programs and teach, with little observation or interference. This separation is highly valued by those in the school.

So is the school's small size. With just under 500 students, the school is small enough that people know each other and share a sense of responsibility for the school. Students note that they must do what is expected of them, because if they do not, the whole school will know in five minutes. They like this fact. Even those students who complained that small size led them to do without electives and facilities that exist in larger schools extolled the virtues of small size and indicated that they would not want to change schools.

Perhaps as a function of size, faculty seem to interact readily and frequently during the day. They say that they have little need for meetings, since they are in constant, informal communication. The department structure of the school may also inadvertently add to the teacher interaction in the school. In the district, department chair positions are allocated by means of a formula: one chairperson for every ten teachers. Village, then, with a staff of 30, has only three department chairpersons. Needless to say, they are responsible for teachers in

more than one department. The chairperson of the English department, for example, is also responsible for Foreign Languages; the chairperson of the Social Studies department is herself a Home Economics teacher with responsibility for the Business department as well. This arrangement is agreeable to the teachers, who say that the department chairpersons fairly represent their views to the principal, and that they rely on themselves for the day-to-day decisions that must be made. The sense of participation and interaction extends to school-wide issues as well. Teachers commented in a variety of ways that they were participants in the governance of the school. They indicated that the principal never made decisions without a consensus from the teachers.

The instructional program in the school emphasizes academic preparation for college. There is little in the way of vocational or business training, and faculty members say that the community would not support such programs. Further, they indicate that there are ample opportunities in the community for students to acquire on-the-job training in industries that are prominent in the area. Teachers say that there are no major problems in the school. Students are motivated, discipline problems are minimal, and absenteeism is slight although irksome: teachers complain that parents take their children on winter vacations, creating the impression that travel is more important than schooling. Aside from this issue, teachers commented repeatedly that Village was a marvelous place in which to teach.

In spite of the geographical distance from central office, however, there are ways in which its control can be felt. Attendance policy has recently been changed so that teachers are required to accept as legitimate any excuse for absence that a parent makes. Thus the parents were

able to pressure the school board to adopt a policy that allows them to legitimately take their children out of school for those mid-winter vacations. Teachers do not like this, but they cannot now penalize students for work missed during these absences. However, they can and do make their feelings known. In addition, the district has recently increased graduation requirements, also as a result of parental pressure. The high school must now require more Social Studies, English and Math for graduation. Finally, the district wants to adopt a traditional grammar book that some of the teachers at Village believe is inappropriate; they feel that the pedagogical approach is wrong and that adoption is an infringement on their right to teach as they choose. All of these changes have come from parental pressure exerted on the School Board, which then has an impact on the teachers and students.

However, these pressures aside, teachers claim loyalty to the school, the principal and the students. The size of the school, the quality of the students, the collegial participation in decision making, the isolation from the rest of the district, and the single focus on academic subjects combine to create a tightly knit sense of community within this school.

Suburban High School

Suburban is a sprawling one story building set on a grassy site in the middle of a single family, predominantly Caucasian, residential community. The high school serves about 550 students in grades 9-12 with a teaching staff of 40. There are other secondary schools in the area that create competition for Suburban's students--private schools, parochial schools, and a regional vocational school. About 25% of the

potential high school students attend one of these alternatives to Suburban High.

The town, which is a suburb of a small industrial city, has little center. There is one downtown street which serves as the commercial and governmental hub. The Board of Education offices are located there on top of a drug store. It is a quiet, not particularly prosperous looking town that conjures images of the sleepy farming community that used to be. In spite of the quiet physical setting, however, people in the school describe the town as one beset with the problems of a more urban area: drug and alcohol abuse, runaway children, teenage pregnancy and divided families loom large in conversations about the school and town. Further, they say that the community has little interest in academic learning. Although the school board is currently supportive of education, the Board of Finance, which must approve the school budget, is still dominated by those whom the school people call 'the anti-education farm element.' There is a real effort in the school system to convince the Board that it is worthwhile to spend money on education.

Administratively, the school system in Suburban is in a state of transition: in the last three years the entire central administration and the administration of the high school have changed. In addition, to complicate the transition, the former high school principal is now the head of guidance, the full-time counselor is new in her job, having come from a special career education program, and the third counselor is new and part-time. There is a media specialist who serves all of the schools; his is a new position, and he is strongly identified with the new administration. One third of the teaching staff is new and non-tenured.

The administrators who now head the school system were hired to make changes. The desire for change came after a long period of stability (some call it stagnation) and materialized first in a change in the composition of the school board. This board, in response to community pressures and the opportunity afforded by the retirement of the former superintendent, assembled a new central administrative team and gave it a mandate to improve, modernize, upgrade, and vitalize the schools. As might be expected, this kind of change has had emotional as well as organizational repercussions.

Although it is not possible to directly connect the massive administrative changes with the anxieties and tensions that teachers and administrators express, it does seem likely that there is a connection. There is a sense in the high school that things are not going well, that there is a lack of leadership, and that what leadership there is, is concerned with inappropriate issues. The depth of feeling varies with participants, but concern pervades the conversati[illegible] The issue that cuts across all departments has to do with the role [illegible]f the principal. There are many in the school who feel that the principal spends too much time in his office dealing with public relations and image, and too little time in the school dealing with teachers, students and their concerns.

The teachers' major concerns have to do with the students. Vandalism is a serious problem in the school. One boys' lavatory is permanently closed as a result of student destruction; students control an outdoor smoking lounge; punishing students with detention or suspension results in further acts of vandalism. Coupled with this reality is the teachers' belief that very few of the students have any interest in aca-

demic subjects. Therefore, teachers find little reward in their work; students at best are apathetic. Teachers feel abandoned by a principal who they feel is trying to make the school look alive to the community, while those inside feel they are dying. It is not possible to spend more than a few minutes in the school without feeling overwhelmed by these sentiments.

Instructionally, the school offers students a wide array of options from which to select their graduation requirements. The school has an academic, college oriented program as well as a business oriented and vocational education program. There is an alternative career education program in the school designed for students who might benefit from a less structured school program. There are advanced placement classes and opportunities for students to take college level physics. For a small school, the course options are large. But given the perceptions of those in the school, the options create an illusion of their school that they find unreal. If students don't care, then course options have no meaning.

Teachers in this school have the opportunity to design their own courses and choose their own materials. There are no curriculum supervisors and the work can be done at the building level. Yet teachers do not think they are in a good situation. The combination of administrative changes and emphasis on image, the presence of disinterested students, and the lack of principal support to control students makes teachers feel that their work is fruitless.

Urban High School

Staff members describe Urban as a comprehensive high school that em-

phasizes the basics. It has just under 1,000 students, with 10% in the vocational education course, 60% in the business course, and 30% in the college course. Of those in the college course, only 50% actually go on to college. It is a big city school with big city problems. The building, which is located on a run-down field amidst low-income housing, is old and in need of repair. The drop out and absentee rates are high: generally there is an absentee rate of 28%, and the principal noted that over the year, 68% of the students attend only 75% of the time. School assignment patterns are determined by a city-wide process devised to accomplish racial integration: this school, however, is not integrated. Its students are predominantly Black. Further, assignment patterns make Urban the last choice of many students. It is a district high school in a city which also supports a set of magnet high schools. When students are not assigned to the magnet school of their choice, they automatically attend their neighborhood district high school. Many, although not all, of the students in Urban asked to attend another school. To add to the complexity, there are many federally and locally funded programs in operation in the school; those that are designed to benefit the brightest students remove them from Urban's regular classes and replace them in other buildings around the city. Thus the brightest and often the most motivated students are removed from the school. Finally, there are a variety of work related programs that require school attendance as a condition of employment. Those students involved often come to school only the amount of time necessary for them to retain their jobs. Given this set of characteristics, one might expect to find a school troubled with discipline problems and a demoralized staff. The reality contradicts this expectation.

Students and teachers like the school. Teachers say that they are working hard to combat the community's belief that it is a dangerous school with poor teachers. They want to see that part of the community that has fled to the parochial schools return to Urban. They know it is an uphill battle. Teachers feel that they will have a better chance to achieve this goal if they can gain formal recognition as a magnet high school devoted to the basic skills. A group of teachers are working to convince the central administration to make this change. Teachers feel that Urban is a good, although not a great, place in which to teach. It would be better if there were more bright, motivated students.

Students, too, commented that they liked the school. Although several admitted to being disappointed when assigned to Urban, they now say that they would not change schools if given the chance. They say that teachers are interested in students if the students are interested in their work, and that the social atmosphere in the school is good for the majority Black population as well as for the tiny Caucasian population.

Both teachers and students agree that the key to understanding the positive atmosphere in the school is the principal's approach to student descipline. The principal, a former military man, runs his school as a ship. Rules are developed centrally and their implementation is taken seriously by each layer of the hierarchy. The result is a consistency of enforcement that is lacking in many places. The main focus of these rules is on attendance--both school lateness and class cutting. (The school still has little success with constant truants.) The effort and emphasis on enforcing attendance rules for those who are in the building has paid off. There are no students hanging around in the halls,

and the perennial problem of first period teachers having their students dribble in over the hour has ended. The method was straightforward: building doors are locked prior to the start of first period, and those who are not inside must bring a legitimate written note in order to be granted entry. After a period of initiation, students started coming on time. Both teachers and students appreciate the consistency of leadership involved in this effort.

Although Urban is located in a large city with many high schools and is involved in a plan to integrate the schools, this principal has a great deal of discretion in running his school. He has increased the English graduation requirements beyond those required by the city. By doing so he supported his staff in their desire to emphasize basic skills. He has enforced his own lateness rules, which again are more stringent than those required by the city. Again, this supports the teachers. His efforts to create a school environment in which the students and the teachers can work energetically to create a cohesive school seem to contribute a great deal to the sense of commitment that exists in Urban. Teachers are not delighted with the composition of the student body, nor do they like their low status among schools in the district. Yet they take pride in what they have been able to accomplish in the face of many obstacles. Strong leadership from the principal in regards to student control, coupled with strong departmental control of curriculum planning and implementation, seem responsible for this atmosphere. In spite of the limitations teachers feel from the lack of student diversity, they have developed strong cohesive departments and a sense of loyalty to each other and to the school.

City High School

City is a three story, dark brown brick building, facing directly onto a six-lane main street. Rows of windows extend the entire length of the three stories, broken only by the centrally located main entrance. Across the street from the school is an athletic field surrounded by a tall, wire-mesh fence. On the corners adjacent to the school are a fast food restaurant and some assorted, small stores. Behind the main building of the school is another athletic field and then, set up on a small hill, is the vocational education building. It is a functional set of buildings in the center of the city.

City was characterized by the principal as a cosmopolitan school. Of the 1,700 students in grades 9-12, there are about 50 Black students, 300 Chicano students, and small groups of students from Vietnam, Iran, and several Pacific Islands. The remaining students are Causasian. About 25% of the schools' graduates go on to college; another 10% go on to some kind of additional vocational training, and the remainder go into the labor force.

Currently, the school is losing students at the rate of about 150 every year. This is due not only to the decrease in birth rate, but to the rapid expansion of the suburbs surrounding the city. As tax rates and city expenses increase, local residents are moving to the less expensive suburbs. This is having a profound and disquieting effect on all of the schools in the city. Although there have not been teacher lay-offs yet, many fear that they will become necessary in the near future. Also, while some of the population is leaving the city, there is an in-migration of Chicano families from neighboring states. Their arrival has resulted in a change in the composition of the student body,

which at times has led to minor confrontations between the various racial groups. The more important result of the population change, however, is new pressure on curriculum and staffing. There are groups of parents who want the schools to respond to their presence by including Chicano cultural heritage in the curriculum and by hiring Chicano staff. Efforts are underway at the central and school building levels to accomodate these requests. City is a school with a long history and tradition. It is one of the oldest high schools in its state, and is proud of the number of students who have graduated and eventually obtained doctoral degrees. These changes in population threaten its image.

In the school, one gets the sense of teachers and students going about their work with purpose and little conflict. A large proportion of the staff has been in the school for over ten years. This lends considerable stability to the school. There are no major problems regarding discipline or attendance among the majority of the students. Only among Chicano students is the drop-out rate very high--between 40% and 50%--and parents and school officials are working on ways to reduce this rate.

Currently, there is an effort to increase faculty involvement in decision making within the schools. The direction for this effort comes from the superintendent, and staff members commented that they take his focus seriously. However, they find it difficult to figure out how to participate. After years of working in a hierarchically organized school and school system, they have neither the expertise nor, in some cases, the real desire, to change their organizational activity. Given the chance to organize their own meetings and set their own agendas, many say they wait for the principal to call the meetings. Only time

will tell whether these structures will come to be viable parts of the school's governance.

The state within which City is located has recently adopted a series of competency exams required for high school graduation. Teachers are waiting to see what the effects of these exams will be on their work. Already, the English exam has led to the creation of remedial classes; with seven mandated exams, teachers are wondering what their school will be like in several years.

One has the sense in City of a school with a long tradition that is about to undergo change. There are forces in the external environment that will help to shape the curriculum, as will changing student populations. One does not have the sense that the faculty and administration have any control over the direction of these changes. In spite of the superintendent's emphasis on faculty participation, the large issues that concern the schools seem to be outside of the school's control.

Central High School

From the outside Central is a modern, two story, windowless structure that has little personality. It is in a city residential area of single family homes, many of which are in need of some repairs. The neighborhood immediately surrounding the school looks colorless. But on entering, one is surprised to find a large open space that serves as a cafeteria and gathering area for students. It is filled with students who are chatting quietly, studying or playing ping pong. For a school with 1,800 students, it is remarkably quiet, clean, and seemingly unsupervised. Most of the students are Chicano.

Central is located in a very large district; there are currently

61,000 students in 90 schools. Eight of these are high schools. The size of the district becomes apparent when teachers and building administrators talk about the ways in which texts are selected and course changes are made. There is much paperwork that must go through the bureaucratic channels of central office. Central is a difficult school to characterize. We did not get to know it well. There is a serious drop-out problem in the school; 725 freshmen entered, about 300 will stay to graduate. Very few of the students go on to college: about 25% join the military. Many of the teachers in the school have former military training or are the spouses of military personnel. The presence of several military installations in the area has much to do with this fact.

Within the school there was little sense of either a strong departmental structure or of individual participation in decision making. Teachers indicated that they often had the opportunity to make their feelings known, but that decisions were made in the district or principal's office. Teachers accepted this centralized decision making. Since the current principal is new in the job, teachers were waiting to see what his emphasis would be. He, like them, was waiting to get a sense of the place. This holding pattern may have influenced our ability to get only a vague impression of the school.

At the moment, all school staff are concerned with attendance. This focus is mandated by the district and is reflected in each of the school's goals. Much of the counselors' time and energy is devoted to tracking down students, contacting parents, and in the extreme, taking parents and students to court when children do not attend school. There is a strong emphasis on the legal aspect of attendance. The emphasis on the

law carries over into teachers' explanations of why they must use mandated texts as well. One gets the sense of a school that is enmeshed in the bureaucratic hierarchy of a large district. Teachers suggests that they tend to support, or at least take seriously, the centralized directives.

The most remarkable aspect of Central is the ambiance in the school. The building is spotless; students move freely around it and teachers and administrators report few instances of discipline problems such as fighting or drugs. None of the classrooms has doors. When asked to speculate on the excellent student behavior, the district superintendent and high school principal remarked that students behaved this well in school because they were taught to behave so at home. We were still unable to fully understand the social control that results in the student behavior in this school

Overview

Each of these high schools is more complex and more interesting than we are able to convey in these brief summaries. Individuals often make a difference in a school and we are unable to capture the very special people who work in each of these schools. Special events and circumstances add to our understanding of a school. We cannot include these details at this time. Therefore, we will begin our description of the patterns of influence and participation in decision making that focus on control and coordination of teachers' work. In reading about the discrete issues, we ask the reader to keep in mind the context that is each school.

CONTROL OF TEACHERS' ASSIGNMENT

There are several levels at which the administration of a school can attempt to control teachers' work. The most distant of these is at the level of course assignments. Although high school teachers are subject-matter specialists, they may have expertise around particular aspects of that subject. They may have preferences about the kinds of students that they teach; some teachers prefer the brightest students, others feel more of a personal reward when they reach students who learn at a slower rate. The assignment process may or may not be responsive to these interests and abilities. In either case, it has a direct impact on teachers' work and on their feelings about that work. Further, whether or not the process is responsive to teachers' concerns, authority for decision making can be retained by the principal, delegated to the department chairperson, or shared by the teachers. We inquired about the process of decision making in course assignment in order to determine the bases on which decisions are made and the patterns of participation in coordination and control of this task.

We found teachers and administrators reporting that assignment decisions are made on the basis of two traditions: seniority and equity. Seniority, of course, refers to the teachers' length of service in the school; equity refers to fairness with which different kinds of students are distributed among the teachers. The system of seniority means that new teachers have little control over their assignments. When new to the school, they object to the lack of control; when they become more senior, they lose their objections. In spite of the dominance of seniority and equity, teachers indicate that they also value professional ex-

pertise; they do not want to teach courses for which they feel incompetent. Yet ocasionally they are assigned to such courses given the dominance of seniority over expertise.

Not surprisingly, we found variability within and between schools in regard to participation. Some teachers have considerable impact on what they teach; others do not. Some teachers are satisfied with their teaching assignment regardless of their participation; others are not. In all of the schools, administrators have the final word on teaching assignment. Some teachers feel that the principal is responsive to their preference; others do not. Principals, for their part, suggest that their decisions are based more on the need to put together a workable master schedule, than on purely instructional concerns. When they cannot give a teacher a course that he or she requested, it is generally because the schedule could not be manipulated to accomodate the particular cluster of courses. Teachers have learned to live with, although not love, last minute changes in assignment due to fluctuating enrollment or new staff allocations that impinge on the entire school schedule.

Although building principals, along with assistant principals in the larger schools, have the final authority to determine a teacher's assignment, they, too, operate within the constraints of a system that stresses seniority and equity as the basis for decisions. Further, all school staff are influenced and limited by the external environment that influences course options in the school. It might have seemed in the late 60s, when schools were diversifying their course offerings, that teachers were less constrained than they are now in a shrinking economy with declining enrollment and an emphasis on basics. But we conceive of constraint not only as the absolute number of choices that a teacher has,

but as the extent to which the teacher's choices are defined by someone other than the teacher. One could argue that in both instances course options and therefore teachers' assignments were influenced by concerns and pressures expressed in the larger environment. Finally, one cannot describe the influence or participation of teachers as a group even in one school. There are real differences in the amount of authority and power that teachers and administrators have within any given school. Thus teachers' reports vary within as well as between schools. Influence and power seem to be associated more with the status of the department than with the particular school.

Traditions as a Source of Control

Teachers speak frequently of seniority and equity as determinants of their course assignments. Their talk, especially in City, conjured images of their courses as "turf" not to be encroached on by other teachers.

> Seniority is built into this school. They (meaning teachers who have been here a while) have had their pick of the courses they teach. The tendency is not to relinquish anything on the part of the old guard. (City/English)[1]

> I am one of the old deans here, and they'd better tread lightly. By this I mean they don't change my teaching load. (City/Social Studies)

> No one better try and take my course. No one would try to take my course! (City/Social Studies)

It's important to note that none of these teachers was really new to the school. The first teacher quoted above referred to the "old guard" of

[1]All quotes are followed by identification of the high school and role of respondents. Teachers are referred to by department membership; all other roles are identified directly. For example, Central/English means that the comment was made by an English teacher at Central High School.

which he was not yet a member; but he has been in the school for 13 years. In a school with low teacher turnover, seniority comes slowly and teachers guard its prerogatives.

In the other high schools, the emotion surrounding course possession did not sound as intense, but the story was the same. Seniority was named as the way in which teachers got their courses.

> Last year when I came I taught one government class and some other classes in the middle school. But he (the other government teacher) left and so I got his classes. It's a seniority system. Now I have it locked. It's seniority rather than merit. (Village/Social Studies)

> I introduced psychology and sociology several years ago and in the past seven years I've always had the courses except for the year I was assistant principal. They don't change courses that people traditionally teach. (Suburban/Social Studies)

> Usually the honors sections are done on the basis of seniority and on a person's ability as a teacher. Teachers don't necessarily always teach honors sections, but it usually works out that once people start to teach them they continue with them. (Central/English)

Using seniority as a guide means that very few teachers get a chance to teach what might be called the 'prime' classes. With a single-section course such as honors math or advanced placement English, one teacher may 'own' the course until retirement. The presence of seniority also reflects the fact that teachers differentially value their classes. This fact relates to a second tradition that is central to the assignment process: equity.

Within each department, there are courses that teachers like and those that they do not like. The sources of their preferences are familiar: teachers prefer classes of bright students with few disciplinary problems, and in which students are interested in the subject matter. (There are always individual teachers with less standard preferences, but

on the whole, these are the issues that teachers mentioned.) While seniority accomplishes the distribution of the prized classes, there is also a system for allocating the classes that no one really wants. Teachers talk of it as equity, of sharing the different academic levels in the school.

> I have very little input into what I teach. It's like that until you establish yourself in a department. We try to split the upper and lower levels. The teacher who has high (levels) pays back dues with a low level course. (Suburban/English)

> In the social studies department we try to share the load. If I have a low United States history, they'll have a low something else. (Suburban/Social Studies)

Given this system, it is not surprising that charges of unfairness and lack of influence come from teachers with the least seniority. In spite of the claims of fairness, seniority prevails and new teachers are often left with what no one else wants to teach.

> I replaced someone and took his courses. My biggest objection is people (teachers) get tracked into what they teach here, just like kids get tracked. Parents complain about the lack of students' skills but nobody does anything about it. How can we do something about it in the school? The bottom class goes to the least experienced person, but they (those students) shouldn't have a woman and/or new teacher . . . they should have a male teacher and they should have an experienced teacher. (Suburban/English)

The English teacher quoted above alludes to another influence on teachers' assignment that is of especial concern to new teachers: sometimes a cluster of courses, or even an individual course, takes on a life apart from the teacher who teaches it. One teacher at City reported that an English teacher had developed a course on folklore, an area in which she had interest and expertise. After teaching the course for one year, she left the system, but the course remained. The course was assigned

to a teacher who said, "I don't know any more about folklore than the wall knows, but I taught the course." Thus a new teacher can feel like a replacement part rather than a vital participant in the school.

Teachers do not describe course assignment, then, predominantly in terms of the bureaucratic structure of the school. They do not say that the principal makes all decisions based on his authoritative position in the school (although occasionally there are such charges). Their description of the process reveals that they themselves maintain the system of seniority and equity within the structure of the school. Teachers rank the array of courses on the basis of desirability. Most of the time, desirability seems to be defined in terms of the kinds of students in the class--bright, motivated, and cooperative. Given this taxonomy, teachers, then, allocate classes among themselves on the basis of seniority and equity. The system may constrain teachers' choices, but it is important to understand that this particular form of constraint is shaped by the teachers. As seen in the next section, it is both dependent on and reinforced by administrative action.

Administrative Authority

Although traditions do govern some decisions concerning teaching assignment, the principal and assistant principal in a school can have considerable impact on assignment decisions by virtue of their position. They tend to maintain a low profile on their involvement, noting that their job is one of scheduling. Administrators do support the system of seniority that exists in each of the schools. This has a conservative effect on course assignment that tends to keep assignments the same. But administrators also have the opportunity to make assignment changes for

other than scheduling reasons, and teachers are well aware that it is the principal who has final authority to approve all assignments.[2]

> (The principal) and I get together and decide the courses the teacher teaches, from their preparation, their major and their minor . . . . There's no arbitrary changes of teachers. It's pretty much tradition who teaches a course all along that determines it. (City/Assistant Principal)

> The office decides what you're going to teach. It's done in the spring and it may be revised during the summer. The principal and the guidance counselors work it out. (Suburban/Social Studies)

> Preferences are not necessarily taken into account about who will teach what, and we have no meetings about it. But people can informally say what they prefer, and a lot of people do. But the assignments are made at the end of the year without any discussion. The policy in the English department, however, is that every two years there is a turnover in teaching assignments. So people can be sure that they'll be teaching the same course for two years, which is important particularly in the electives where courses have to be developed. (Central/English)

These comments from three different schools suggest that control is in the principal's office, but that the principal's ability to make decisions is also limited by the traditions that develop at the department level. Thus, there is an interaction between the bureaucratic authority of the principal and the traditions of the teachers that results in the assignment system.

When a teacher retires or wants to relinquish a prized class, the principal seems to have clear authority to reassign that class to another teacher. It was difficult and uncomfortable, however, for principals to describe in detail how these decisions are made; comments suggest that if the class has high prestige, then the principal takes into special consi-

---

[2]The role of the department chair is limited and informal in all schools with the exception of Urban. The distinct features of Urban's process will be described separately.

deration the teaching abilities of the various teachers in the department.[3] The class might well be thought of, then, as a prize or reward that the principal can bestow. One teacher described the way in which he came to teach English honors, and in the process neatly summed up the various ways in which assignments are made.

> I was approached by the principal and the counselor (the counselor responsible for the honors program) about teaching the honors classes. I decided that I wanted to do it. I got the communications classes because another teacher retired and someone had to teach them. I volunteered. But the sophomore class that I teach was layed on me the first day. I didn't know until early in September that I was going to teach that class, and it's a good thing that I had taught it once before because I had all of my materials prepared. (City/English)

In these schools, members of the various departments do not question the authority of the administration to assign them to classes. However, they vary in their perceptions of whether the principal is fair. The perception of fairness is related to the amount of influence teachers feel they have in determining their assignments. New teachers and teachers in the Foreign Language departments, in particular, claim that they have little influence on their assignments. They blame this in large part on the principal. As we have already described the way in which new teachers get their assignments, we will focus here on the assertions of the Foreign Language teachers.

Departmental Status: The Foreign Language Departments

Foreign Language teachers claim that they have little influence over

---

[3] This issue was pursued most vigorously in City, where honors classes are very important to the principal. There was a reluctance to discuss the different teaching abilities of the staff that might weigh on such decisions. The guidance counselor, who has a central role in these staffing decisions, resisted being explicit about criteria. When pressed, he said "We all try to choose teachers who are enthusiastic." Maintaining the public image that "all of our teachers are capable" seems to be a strong norm.

what they teach, even when other subject-area teachers in the same school have a great deal of influence. They seem to be correct. Across the schools, Foreign Language teachers were dissatisfied with the array of courses they taught and with their inability to teach beyond a second year in the same subject.[4] The most extreme example of the relative influence of the different departments can be seen juxtaposing the comments of English and Foreign Language teachers at Village High. English teachers at Village were satisfied with their influence, while Foreign Language teachers constantly felt thwarted in their attempts to shape their assignments.

> We never have any say over what we teach. In other schools I've been able to submit what I wanted, but not here. (Village/Foreign Language)

> The idea we had was to vary the language courses [between us]. She'd take some and I'd take some [of each language]. But he [principal] didn't do it. We've talked to [him] about what we want for next year, but we don't know what he'll do; we don't know what he'll give us. (Village/Foreign Language)

In contrast, teachers in the English department work together to be sure that they will come up with an equitable distribution. They also note that if it isn't working out, the school is small enough to permit some shifts during the school year.

> We're going to distribute the levels among ourselves. If it becomes a problem, we can switch. If a kid doesn't fit in a level, we'll fit him in somewhere else. That's not going to be any problem. I don't mind if I teach the remedials; I don't mind if I teach all levels. I just want them all to be in the same level [in each class]. (Village/English)

In fact, it is the principal who controls teacher assignment for all

---

[4]Not all of their dissatisfaction can be traced to the building principal. There are other pressures that impinge on the Foreign Language departments over which the administration has little, if any, control. They will be mentioned later.

of the teachers in that he has the prerogative to share his authority or retain it. He does not delegate this authority equally across departments; he does not afford the two Foreign Language teachers the opportunity to work out together what they want to teach. The same pattern of department influence existed in all of the schools, and we can only speculate on why the systems operate so differently for the various departments. It appears that the departments have different amounts of status, and that departmental status influences teachers' control and autonomy in the school. This suggestion, however, leaves us without a clear grasp of the factors related to status. Most obviously, some courses are required for graduation and others are not. This may both account for and reflect the status of the English departments. Undoubtedly, there are other, more subtle influences on status that we did not uncover.

Urban High School's English Department: A Variation

Teachers saw the principal as ultimately controlling their assignments in four of the five schools. By contrast, teachers in Urban say that the principal has transferred his authority to the department chairperson. In Urban, the English department chairperson has just implemented a new process for teacher assignment which he developed and which presents the issues of seniority, tradition, equity and authority in an interesting variation. Under the former system of course assignment, teachers chose individual courses on the basis of seniority. The department chair made the first choices because he had been in the school longest. However, this year he decided to cluster courses so that more teachers in the department have an opportunity to teach one of the better sections. Instead of selecting individual courses, teachers will select

a cluster based on seniority. Teachers think this is fair.

> He took the top 11 courses and made schedules out of them to be more fair. For example, no one teacher now gets all the industrials [students who are in the industrial arts program]. (Urban/English)

Another teacher commented on this process:

> I'm in a good position here. I have seniority after [the department chair] and I get to say, 'I'll have that course.' I also have to teach 12th grade industrial English and there used to be more flexibility for that. But he sets it up so there are not four preps or three blocks of classes together. That's the union rules. (Urban/English)

This teacher, under the old system of selecting individual courses by seniority alone, would not have taught an industrial class; under the new system, she will. Yet the sense that the new system is fair comes across in her comments. She does not sound bitter or angry about having to have that class, and feels that the department works well together in gaining some equity in course distribution. Teachers in Urban do share a high regard for seniority; in this they are similar to teachers in the other schools. But due to the reorganization of the course assignment process, they feel that they have increased the equity of the system. They have thereby increased their feeling of control over their work, and they have a sense of ownership of the choices. All of this has been accomplished at the department level, through the authority of the department chairperson. However, the department chairperson derives his authority from the principal. It is a function of the authority hierarchy of the school.

In light of this and the earlier discussion of the varying status of departments in the high schools, it is important to note that teachers in Urban's Foreign Language department do not share these feelings of

control over their assignments. They live with the same uncertainty as their colleagues in other schools. In Urban, they are not teaching across disciplines, but they are concerned with being transferred out of the school if enrollment drops. Their lack of status and control, however, does not necessarily come from the unwillingness of the principal to grant them authority to control their assignments. It comes from the fact that their subject matter is not required, and that therefore, enrollment is variable and dependent to a great extent on the choices students make. As the chairperson of the department notes, "Our problem is with students, not books or schedules." We do not know whether Foreign Language teachers would have the same degree of control as English teachers absent these factors. What is clear is that control of assignment is influenced by more than the authority hierarchy of the school.

The External Environment: Controls Originating Outside of the School Building

Administrators and teachers both reported that changes in the school environment can have a serious constraining effect on teacher assignments. There are a host of factors that are beyond the control of the teachers or principals. Some of these--state or local mandates that change graduation requirements, funding changes, and the implementation of competency testing--are a direct result of the bureaucratic organization of the school district. Others, such as declining enrollment and students' preferences, originate outside of the school. Both kinds of factors require the schools to respond in ways that directly affect teachers' assignments. They seem to have the greatest negative impact on Foreign Language teachers at this point in time.

Due to declining enrollment, some departments, particularly Foreign Language, cannot support full-time teachers in two or more languages. This means that if a teacher is to be a Foreign Langugage teacher, he or she must also be able to teach something else. This phenomenon has resulted in several teachers in Central and City teaching in two and sometimes three subject areas. Teachers say that they chose to teach across departments, but this seems to minimize the very real pressure on the teacher to either take such an assignment or be without a job. One teacher described his movement across departments.

> I came as a Social Studies teacher, but about a year later the French teacher retired and a Social Studies teacher was also going to be declared surplus. I volunteered to move out of the Social Studies department and into the French department. Again there was a decline in enrollment and I moved from teaching Social Studies and French to part-time French and part-time English. Last year I moved back to part-time Social Studies. (City/Currently teaching Social Studies, French, and English)

Teachers say that they voluntarily make these moves, but they are under considerable pressure to do so. There is a great deal of work involved in continually preparing to teach classes in new disciplines, and this is coupled with the uncertainty of not knowing whether they will even be in the same school in the coming year. Although they tend to minimize it, declining enrollment has the effect of limiting the teachers' ability to choose their courses, and of forcing them to teach in areas of secondary expertise. One administrator voiced a concern for the quality of education that this kind of shifting might produce:

> Multiple assignments, instances such as a teacher teaching instrumental music and English--we have many teachers like that; maybe a third of the teachers at the secondary level have this multiple assignment. They don't like it, but it's a situation we can't avoid and hopefully they teach something related to their major . . . . The English

> department has been hurt [by these multiple assignments]. People seem to think that anybody who has graduated from college can teach English and I don't like it. The language arts specialist can't stand it. It's a really bad attitude, and it comes mostly from the principal. Of course, there is some truth in saying that anyone can teach English, since it's our native language and everybody has taken English in school, and at the same time anyone can't teach algebra. That's true. But it's also true that not anyone can teach English. For example, we have an instrumental music teacher teaching English, and that teacher needs a lot of help. But there's something sacred about instrumental music and about coaches, which means they have to be retained, even if English teachers are let go. (City/Central Administrator)

Declining enrollment has also had an influence on teachers' extracurricular assignments, albeit in a somewhat less direct way. Teachers claim they feel pressure from within the schools to take responsibility for extracurricular activities. Some teachers take on these activities because they enjoy them, but increasingly teachers take them on because they have a sense that it is expected of them and that, particularly in the face of declining enrollment, those teachers who contribute much to the school will be retained. In fact, in City High this consideration is built into the process by which teachers are declared excess. An English teacher commented that one of the reasons she keeps doing the yearbook is because that job will make her more important to the school and thus less likely to be declared excess.

> I keep doing the yearbook because I don't want to go to a junior high. In a high school these days, you have to sponsor an activity or be on a committee in order to be sure you can stay. (City/English)

A Social Studies teacher also commented on the dual incentives to sponsor an activity.

> I did it [sponsored the swim team] for the kids. Now I hear that teachers don't get out of special activities due to the special needs of the school. Teachers want to be doing something in the school that will make them indispensible. (City/Social Studies)

There are other factors that impinge on what teachers teach. Formal changes in graduation requirements can wipe out an elective that once was considered a requirement: increasing the English requirements resulted in a state history course becoming under-enrolled at Village. Competency tests have caused the elimination of some English electives in two of the schools, and have resulted in the development of courses in which teachers focus on getting students past the exams. Teachers who have an interest in English literature or the novel in some of the schools now no longer teach those courses because of the bureaucratic changes that have led to their elimination. Teachers and administrators both are limited by this range of factors that influence the courses that will be offered.

Students' preferences also influence teachers' assignments. Urban High has been interested in offering an ethnic studies course: not enough students signed up for it and so the teacher who wanted to teach it did not. On the other hand, the students expressed an interest in a Law and Justice course and so a teacher will be teaching that. In the Foreign Language departments, student enrollment and choices are again particularly salient. Most schools, if they require a language for their college-bound students, require only two years of it. Teachers who would like to teach third and fourth years of a language need to recruit students to take such courses. Often they teach them on their own time: teachers in two of the schools held small lunchtime tutorials in order to be able to teach the more advanced levels of their courses.

Recruiting the Students

Teachers in each of the schools do make efforts to entice potential

students to register for their classes. These recruitment efforts reveal the competition among teachers that is created by the structure of the high schools. Given the fixed number of periods in a day, staff allocation patterns, and the requirement for a minimal number of students in order to teach a course, one teacher's gain in students is another one's loss. Competition then can and does take place across and within departments. One could argue that from the student's point of view, this competition is a benefit: teachers are pressed to develop interesting and exciting courses that students will freely select. Certainly some teachers see their role as creating interest in their courses.

> We talk up the electives in our own classes. The biggest network is the kids themselves. That can make or break a teacher. Informally, I counsel kids too; sometimes kids don't see a counselor for a year. (Urban/Social Studies)

> I do little things. I talk to the kids in the hall in the foreign language if I know them. I take the kids to restaurants. I make it appear as fun. We have tee shirts with French slogans on them. But we get a lot of competition from Math and Science. (Urban/Foreign Language)

> We send each year's officers from the Latin Club to talk to classes around the school when course selection time comes. They talk about how much they like Latin, about the city-wide competition for Latin students, that they can win prizes. They enroll their friends. (Central/Foreign Language)

> Students from the clubs and activities such as band, ROTC, drama, go to the middle schools to entice the kids to come to the high school. (Central/Guidance Counselor)

> My job is to sell the high school. We lose 25 percent of the junior high school kids. Nine or ten go to [the regional vocational/technical school], and the rest go to parochial schools. I point out the really positive features . . . . To the academically bright kids, I tell them about the [college] courses. We lost a lot of bright kids to the parochial schools. (Suburban/Guidance Counselor)

Some teachers in City said that they considered such attempts to recruit students unprofessional, yet at the same time,

those in the beleaguered Foreign Language department admitted that they did make some efforts to interest students in their courses.

> We haven't done anything as a group to recruit students in the last five years. We don't really see it as professional. I do make a slide presentation, particularly to the honors English students in the 9th grade to get them interested in taking a foreign language. (City/Foreign Language)

One guidance counselor described his visits to the feeder junior high schools where he meets with students and parents in an attempt to recruit students to the Honors Program.

Given the constraints set up by school organization, then, teachers do attempt to influence if not control the array of courses that they teach through actively recruiting students. Such efforts do little to increase teachers' coordination one with another. Rather, they point to the individualistic orientation that teachers must take in order to effectively lure students away from their colleagues. Counselors, on the other hand, refer to their attempts to sell the school as a unit. Their job is to make the school sound exciting and responsive to students and parents who may live in a community that offers realistic alternatives to the public high school. Further, counselors attempt to attract those students who may be inclined to drop out altogether. This latter effort was an important emphasis in the recruitment program in Central.

Although the recruitment efforts just described can increase students' knowledge of courses and programs, teachers do attempt at times to limit students' options, either to fill a class that they want to teach or to schedule the student into a class that the teacher feels will be beneficial and which he or she feels the student would not select if given a choice. We have few examples of this kind of persuasion and cannot know whether they represent rare occurrences or common events. In

Village, State History is an elective course. It is one that the faculty want to teach and feel is a basic course that ought to be required of all students. They therefore stretch the truth a bit in describing the benefits of this class to prospective students.

> [State] History is a course that students take out of their own interest only. But we're trying to get the younger kids into it instead of shop. We see it as a preparation for United States History and World History. We tell the students that they will need the skills that we will teach in [State] History in order to do the other two courses well. We don't let 9th and 10th graders into United States History either. It's no good for the kids; they can't keep up with the work with the older kids. It's not a district policy; we demand it here at Village. (Village/Social Studies)

As we did not have any student comments on the ways in which they were encouraged to take State History, we cannot know whether they feel that they have a choice in the matter. Clearly, the intention of the faculty is to make the course appear to be a requirement. The same approach is taken in Urban with regard to the Remedial Reading classes. In Urban, as in Suburban, teachers can recommend that students register for the Remedial Reading class, but they cannot be required to do so. In Suburban, teachers complained that they were unable to persuade students to elect the course. In Urban, teachers have by-passed the problem by assigning students as though they had no choice:

> I will select remedial reading for them again for next year if they need it. I play it like there's no choice, but they don't have to do it. Remedial reading is not on the elective sheet; they get assigned. (Urban/English)

This teacher commented that most students do not question their assignment to remedial reading.

Teachers have mixed feelings about these efforts to recruit students. On the one hand, they see them as necessary not only in response to declining enrollment but due to the students' desire to be "sold" on an

exciting course. Teachers say that their authority alone, without something jazzy, will not convince a student to register for their courses. When students have choices to make then, teachers must respond. To the extent that they are successful, as a function of reputation, personality, or student interest in the course content, they can influence their course assignments. If they are unsuccessful in recruiting students, they may have far less influence over their assignments. Further, if significant numbers of students repeatedly opt for the Home Economics electives, for example, the number of teachers allocated to the Foreign Language department may be reduced. Thus teachers have a real stake in maintaining their enrollments, and they work to do so. As we will see in the discussion of course options, however, there are more limits imposed on teachers' ability to control their assignments than those generated by student choice.

The Influence of Student Achievement on Teachers' Assignments

As we have seen, equity is an important ingredient in understanding teachers' satisfaction with their assignments. Equity refers to the distribution of students by achievement level. This is not to say that specific subject matter is insignificant; teachers do claim ownership of the special classes that they teach. But for teachers, the decisions about which they care deeply have to do with the distribution of students in their classes. Teachers do not like to teach classes in which students are grouped heterogeneously by achievement levels; they prefer classes in which students are homogeneously grouped.

> The problem is having high level and low level kids together. I believe in homogeneous grouping. It probably sounds regressive, but I believe in it. With high and

> low kids, you reach for the middle and you don't get anyone. Some of them are really needing attention and you can't get to them. I've been pushing for homogeneous classes in English. I love teaching and I love teaching English here, and I wouldn't mind teaching remedial classes or even all of them. I just want all of the same level kids in the same class. (Village/English)

Teachers in the five high schools have varying amounts of control over the distribution of students in their classes as a function of school organization and departmental membership. In Central and City, schools in which the principal's formal authority plays a significant role in teacher assignment, there is also bureaucratic control over the assignment of students. Teachers make recommendations but they may not be binding. The teachers in Village, Urban, and Suburban seem to have a greater personal influence in decisions about students. Regardless of the locus of control, however, the current emphasis in all of the English departments is to assign students to classes according to their achievement level. Teachers in the Social Studies and Foreign Language departments, with the exception of Suburban, say that they must teach heterogeneous groups of students.

Methods of sorting students. Three of the schools, Village, City, and Urban use tests as the basis on which to place students in their English classes. The tests, however, are used in different ways and suggest different sources of control. Teachers in City, for example, exert virtually no control on the assignment of students to classes other than Honors English; students are assigned on the basis of a competency exam that they must take in the eighth grade. Those who fail the exam are in one set of classes, those who pass and are average are in another, and the brightest are in the Honors class. Teachers are delighted with this side effect of the competency exams.

> (The new course divisions) have peeled off the top and peeled off the bottom, and I think its' great because now it's homogeneous. (City/English)

> Remedial is challenging to teach, and now the regular classes are more interesting to teach. Separating the students has enhanced what you can cover in the regular classes. The kids like it better too, and it's more fun and fair for both groups. Before, the teacher was at a disadvantage, but now we've skimmed off the bottom and we've skimmed off the top. (City/English)

However, the teachers were not instrumental in bringing about this change. It is a side effect of the formal, bureaucratic press for accountability.

In both Village and Urban, teachers also use standardized tests to determine class placement, but the tests are administered at the initiation of the teachers and not by the district. Further, the test results are modified by teacher judgment; they are not the only determinant of class placement.

> Teacher intuition is as good as any test, but it's not legitimate. The test and the computer print-out legitimates it. So no one is just assigned to classes; they are all individually assigned by the tests. The other thing is we can show improvement due to the national tests. We can't just say that a teacher says that a youngster's improved. We have a test score to show it. Those in the first quartile on the tests get assigned to the reading clinic where the teacher ratio is 1:6. Those in quartile two and three have an automated program that they work on, and the lower 40% altogether are assigned to the Title I teacher where the ratio of students is 10:1. (Urban/English)

> The teachers determine the levels of class. We give a test . . . . Well, we gave it and some of us use it more than others. I think emotional stage is also important, as important as the score on the test. We use the test and what we know of them (the students). We have a list of who should go where and we'll get together and hash it out. (Village/English)

These teachers are in greater control of the assignment of students than are the teachers in City, and their comments suggest that the tests func-

tion in quite a different fashion in these schools. In City, it serves as a way to formally by-pass teacher judgment, and place responsibility for the assignment of students in the hands of the administration of the school. This is not the case in Urban and Village. Teachers in these two schools have the authority to place students as they deem appropriate, and they use a test mainly to bolster the image of the process by which they make these assignments. They themselves are not questioning the value of teacher judgment; they are suggesting that the public will not accept teacher judgment as a satisfactory basis for decision making. Therefore, they use the test as an indicator of the rationality of the assignment process. This can be seen as another instance in which the formal structure of the school complies with the myths that exist in the larger society. The effect of this compliance is to increase the legitimacy of the teachers' decisions.

One might argue that the competency exam is also a response to society's demand for rational decision making about students. But even if this is correct, it does not change the fact that it is the competency exam and not the teachers that determines class placements. There is a qualitative difference in teachers' participation and influence in sorting students in these schools. In City the sorting is accomplished by the exam. Teachers are pleased with the result, but they neither initiated it nor do they control it. In Urban and Village, on the other hand, teachers initiated the testing process and retain the right to make decisions about individual students on a variety of criteria in addition to the test result.

Exams are not the basis of placement decisions in either Central or Suburban. In Central teachers talk cryptically about informally counsel-

ling students into appropriate classes, but it is not a subject that generated many comments. Suburban is the only one of these five schools in which students have both a large array of courses from which to select and the authority to make their own choices. The reality of student authority in the selection process leads to uncertainties in the authority relationship between teachers and students. Teachers want students to take courses that are challenging; they say students select the easiest courses. Because teachers feel powerless to influence many of those decisions, there is a tension between students and teachers on this issue. Both sides are aware of the concern:

> We don't let kids sign up for courses that are too easy for them. But if a kid really pushes it, he'll get his way. The principal is under the thumb of the community. He's a puppet and he folds at the slightest pressure. (Suburban/English)

> At the end of the selection, we go over each student's program to see what they've taken. We look to see if they took a hard course one semester and an easy one the next. We suggest to the student another course if this happens, or we call the parents. But the parents just say, "I can't do anything!" if we tell them that the student signed up for a too easy course. The guidance office doesn't help much either; they're stupid and disorganized. (Suburban/English)

> First I pick my courses and then like I go to my English teacher and ask her if it's okay. Then I go to the guidance office and they get my grades and see if a course is too easy. (Suburban/9th grade girl)

> If I want to take Justice II, they'll say 'No, it's too easy.' Or if a dumb kid came, they'd say 'No, it's too hard.'. . . I make up my own mind. (Suburban/11th grade girl)

It seems that allowing students the opportunity to make decisions about the academic level of their courses threatens the traditional authority of the teacher to make those decisions. Further, students don't make the same choices that teachers would make for them. This forces teachers to

work hard to convince students to take the more difficult courses; when persuasion fails, they may resort to more surreptitious practices. As one staff member indicated, if a student approaches him and wants to register for a class that he feels is too simple, he need only say that it is filled.

Although teachers in Suburban do not talk about their efforts to sort students into homogeneous groups, their course distinctions accomplish that sorting. If teachers are successful in persuading students to take the courses that they think are appropriate, the students will be divided into homogeneous groups. The interesting twist in Suburban is that the outcome is uncertain. In each of the other schools the weight of influence seems to lean toward the personal authority of the teacher or the bureaucratic authority of the school board which mandates the competency exams. The student does not seem to have an opportunity to significantly influence the mix of students in a class. Only in Suburban is the outcome uncertain; it is only in Suburban that students have a real voice in selecting their English and Social Studies courses. It is not surprising that real student authority leads to conflict.

We have seen that English classes tend to be homogeneous. Teachers in the Social Studies and Foreign Language departments would like to have similarly constituted classes, but with the exception of Suburban, they claim little opportunity to influence student assignment.

> I recommend if they go on or don't go on if I've had them. But if they want to go on, they do. They're supposed to pass with a C or a D, but counselors let them in no matter what. (Village/Foreign Language)

> There aren't levels in Social Studies; we're not big enough for that. And we don't have any reading problems, so kids sign up for what they have to take or what they want. (Village/Social Studies)

> We would like to be involved in course selection, but we can't make it stick. We want some screening about who comes into our classes. (Urban/Social Studies)
>
> Some don't select it (Foreign Language). They say they want to be in the college program, so they have to have a language. There should be some way of determining if they can do college material . . . . Even if they come from another school and are failing a language there, they can take it here. (Urban/Foreign Language)
>
> A lot of students are plopped into Foreign Languages when they're not doing well in English. That's a real problem. I'd like to see more screening. . . . Some of them think it will be easy and they don't want to memorize anything, and then they get in and can't do the work or don't want to do the work and can't do the language grammar and so they transfer out. . . (City/Foreign Language)

Lack of control over students is congruent with these teachers' lack of control over their own course assignments. Although the bureaucratic structure of the school does not formally establish status differences among the different departments, they seem to develop as a function of the departments' control over time and students. Those departments that offer the basic, required courses, and therefore control most of the students' time, exert the most influence on the school schedule. Almost by definition, control of the schedule means high status; high status generally leads to greater teacher influence.

Teachers then have varying degrees of success in their desire to teach homogeneous groups of students. At the moment, a variety of forces are working together to accomplish that objective for English teachers. Social Studies and Foreign Language teachers have less of an opportunity to achieve this goal. Given the precarious status of the Foreign Language departments, one could conclude that currently they are more concerned with keeping their enrollments up than they are with sorting the students in their classes.

Summary

We have been describing patterns of participation and influence in the process of assigning teachers to their classes in an effort to understand control and coordination of this aspect of teachers' work. Our description reveals that teacher assignment occurs within a context of constraints imposed first from the bureaucratic structure of the school and second from the adaptations to those constraints. The bureaucratic structure of the school--the graduation requirements, the principal's authority, and the division of school time into courses, classes, and periods--forms the background against which decisions about teachers' assignments are made. The need to coordinate these structural features into one fixed schedule determines the issues that can be decided when assigning teachers.

The formal authority to assign teachers rests with the principal in each of these schools; we have seen that each of them plays a slightly different role in the process. All of the principals support the system of seniority and equity that has developed, but beyond this, they differ in the amount of influence that they permit their teachers. These differences seem to stem from personal style as well as from the demands of the bureaucratic structure. In Central and in City, principals stress their formal responsibility to assign teachers to their classes; teachers talk about their right to influence rather than control those decisions. In Suburban and Village, principals stress the joint nature of decision making, although in Village department membership strongly influences teacher control. In Urban the principal has delegated the entire responsibility to the department chairpersons. This variance in style suggests that principals have some discretion in determining pat-

terns of participation within their schools; both teachers and principals suggested that other schools in their areas often accomplished assignment differently. At the same time, patterns of participation do tend to carry over from one sphere of decision making to another. As we shall see, those schools in which teachers have considerable influence over their assignment tend to allow them similar influence over materials and students. We have also seen that teachers' influence varies between departments and across schools, with variance related to the part of the schedule that the department commands. The English department, with many required courses, commands a greater portion of the schedule and students and has a greater control over assignment than either the Social Studies or Foreign Language departments.

When teachers talk about controlling their assignments, they speak primarily about their students. We have looked at two ways in which students are important to teachers. The first concerns their level of academic achievement. Teachers prefer teaching homogeneous groups of students, and in those schools and departments in which they have the opportunity, teachers attempt to sort the students by academic achievement. Following this sorting, the system of seniority and equity provides a way of distributing classes to teachers. Again, department is related to teachers' ability to influence the sorting of students.

The second aspect of control of students relates to the situations in which students have the potential of controlling teachers' courses. We speak here of the students' options to choose among an array of electives. When teachers' assignment is dependent on generating a minimal enrollment, teachers actively work to recruit students. They inform students of their courses and attempt to convince them that the courses are

interesting and worthwhile. At times, they may use their authority to convince students that they have little choice.

As we approached the end of our discussion of the process of teacher assignment, we began to consider these ways in which the students and the courses together influence teachers' assignment. Although we can describe the process without regard to the influences of the actual courses, this will not provide a realistic picture of the control and coordination that go into assigning teachers to their classes. There are ways in which the bureaucratic structure, the environment, the teachers, and the students influence the array of courses available. These influences directly influence both the content and the process by which teacher assignment is accomplished. Course options then must be considered in any description of teacher assignment. We turn now to a closer look at course options in each of the schools in an effort to understand the factors that influence those options and the ways in which they then interact with the process of teacher assignment.

COURSE OPTIONS

The bureaucratic authority structure of the schools has a significant influence on the set of courses that are offered in these high schools. State and local governing bodies set graduation requirements and, although they may not specify the titles of all required courses, they nevertheless determine a large part of the distribution of the student time by subject matter. Time and students are the teachers' key resources. But there are other influences as well.

Funding for special programs or courses may become available and require the addition of courses. Changing trends, such as the current back-to-basics movement and the press for formal accountability, shift educators' ideas about which courses they ought to offer in their schools. Teachers influence course options through their opportunity to originate electives that they want to teach. They may also feel under some pressure to offer courses that interest students in an especial effort to bolster their position in the school in a time of declining enrollment. On the other hand, declining enrollment may eliminate electives that attract few students. Principals encourage the development of courses in areas that interest them. Further, the students' post-high school plans influence the courses that the schools offer. Students must be prepared to meet the minimal entrance requirements of local colleges, training schools, and job opportunities or the school may be seen as failing in its task. The list of factors that can influence course options is long and suggests that there are multiple influences from diverse sources that shape the course options in a school.

In considering these influences, we have been struck by the way in

which all of them currently focus on the return to basic skills. Regardless of the source, course changes reflect an emphasis on basic skills. This lends a sense of cohesion to the changes that mask their diverse origins. It also sheds light on the issue of responsiveness. If schools shift direction as a result of similarly focussed pressures from a wide variety of sources, they can be seen as institutions that respond to widely held social judgments.

Responding to Changing Ideas about Instruction

The cohesion of pressures impinging on schools is seen in the efforts to centralize and control curriculum in each of the five schools. It is an effort that takes the shape of "boogeying for basics rather than dancing for democracy" as one administrator quipped. In Social Studies as well as in English, there is pressure to require specific courses and to stress basic skills. As we have mentioned, this pressure comes from within and outside of the schools.

Teachers see themselves as a part of the back-to-basics movement. They complain about students' lack of skills and stress the need to do away with courses that emphasize fun rather than fact. Teachers see the issues as setting up a choice: stress basics or provide diversity. They do not suggest that one can stress basic skills within a diverse array of courses. Teachers' attitudes support the movement to fewer options for students.

> We use to have tons of electives. Now we're getting back to basics and I like it. Electives now are in addition to the core program. We've dropped most of them due to insufficient enrollment. Even the newspaper is under-enrolled. (Village/English)

> Just like everyone else, we're going back to basics.

> There used to be a bunch of electives, but the English teachers decided we needed some remedial work. (Village/English)
>
> We're down to basic skills, a core curriculum. At one time we offered 41 electives, a whole gamut . . . . Anyway, we were graduating glib illiterates at the time. In 1976, we went back to basic skills and we were lucky because we anticipated the coming of the competency tests. We're in the process now of revamping that basic curriculum. (Urban/English)
>
> They have very little choice. They used to have electives that changed every semester, but the bright kids took Mickey Mouse courses and we had to restrict what they take. Now the 9th and 10th grades have extra English. If the scores go up [on the standardized tests] then we can reinstate some electives, but not like before. (Urban/English)

In the English department in City, teachers report similar significant changes over the past few years. There had been mini-courses, such as drama, short story, and journalism. Increasingly, teachers found that a lack of continuity between the courses left students without any clear body of skills in reading, composition, or grammar. The chairperson of the department indicated that teachers wanted the flexibility of elective courses for the juniors and seniors, but felt that it was inappropriate for the freshmen and sophomores. During the past few years, teachers have restructured the courses and eliminated the mini-courses to reflect these preferences.

Although teachers claim initiative in much of the return to basics, there are a host of factors that have helped to prod them in this direction. One of these is the national conversation about the failure of the schools to teach basic skills, and the need for accountability. This has set the stage for decisions made within the authority hierarchy and those made by individual actors without regard for the formal structure. Urban

High's English department provides a good example of the effect of this national conversation on course options within a high school.

In Urban, the formal authority hierarchy of the district did not ask the teachers to decrease the options that they offered to students. Neither did the principal make this request. Yet Urban's teachers have developed a tightly structured, basic curriculum that gives the teachers and the students little choice in their assignments. Many factors entered into this shift, not the least of which was a changing student population that resulted from new school assignment patterns in the district. Teachers felt that the students would benefit from the basic curriculum; parents in the community supported this orientation. Teachers and the administrators talk with pride of their highly structured English program which offers virtually no options.

> We're trying to get a sequence of skills going. We have a sequence of 3 periods in the 9th grade. It used to be 8 periods with one teacher; now we have 5 periods with one teacher and a totally new assortment of kids for the 3-period class. Now we're trying to revise in terms of structure to deal with materials you use so there's no overlap among these classes, so the kids don't get the same materials in both classes. Also a couple of skills have been falling through the cracks--listening and speaking skills. We need to coordinate this instruction. Some of us have been remiss in this and it will be picked up in this core curriculum. We're going to have a list of skills and materials associated with each skill at each level. We also want to sequence the grammar skills so we don't have to keep teaching the same things over and over again. After all, if they don't have it by 11th grade, they'll never have it. We give department tests once a month for the grammar. Different staff members develop the tests and the answer key. The first year every kid in the school took the same exam; next year, the 9th and 10th grades and the 11th and 12th grades will have their own exams. Then everyone had to teach the same skills in the same time block. Essay exams we correct ourselves according to what we've taught. Final exams, they're made up by [the de-

> partment chairperson]. But we will do the composition portion of it ourselves. Last year we pitched in and did the exams together for the first time; we used to do individual exams. My seminar group didn't take the exam but did a term paper, with permission of the department and the headmaster . . . . We are lucky; we pull together and hang together. In the English department, we'll hang around and hash things over. We talk discipline, kids, curriculum. It's a good department. (Urban/English)

It is difficult to imagine teachers praising such a curriculum had it been mandated by the district office. However, this one, developed and implemented by the teachers in response to their own perceptions of what students need, is highly valued. In addition to the satisfaction that teachers derived from developing this English program together, it is important to note that their perception of what students need is congruent with the general back-to-basics trend. This suggests that it does not require a district mandate to convince teachers to coordinate their efforts and restructure the curriculum. They will do it as a response to changing cultural emphasis of which they are a part. However, it is also important to remember that these changes could not have been accomplished without the approval and support of the principal. English teachers wanted more than a return to basics; they wanted the principal to increase the English graduation requirements within the building so that students would have to take eight rather than five periods of English in the ninth grade. Such a shift required principal authority and in this case, he agreed. Teachers talk about the principal's support for their curriculum rather than the power attached to his position as principal. Had the principal thwarted their efforts, however, they would have been more conscious of his ultimate control over their work. Teachers in other departments note the effects of increasing requirements:

> I think the high English requirement affects

> us with Juniors and Seniors. If a student enters and wants to be in the college program, they must take French or Spanish. If they change their minds at grade 11 from Business to College, they have not time to pick up a language. Chemistry is ten periods a week. Most of them take Chemistry. (Urban/ Foreign Language)

Teachers in the English department have a greater control over their course options than teachers in the Social Studies and Foreign Language departments. In large part, this is due to the different status of the departments and to the principal's personal willingness to support an increase in the English requirement. It is also interesting in this regard to realize that the principal has the authority to increase the requirement without recourse to district approval. This was an in-school decision; similar requirements do not exist in all of the city's high schools. Again, this is an indication that the principals have some degree of leeway in shaping their schools within the constraints of the formal structure.

Teachers in the other districts also saw themselves as active participants in the back-to-basics movement but, unlike Urban, there were often obvious, formal pressures for them to move in this direction. In City, for example, teachers' perceptions that students should have fewer options are coupled with the implementation of a series of state-mandated competency exams. These English exams are administered to all students in the eighth grade, and students must pass in order to get a high school diploma. Those who fail the exam (about 30% of the students in the last year) enter a remedial class in ninth grade and must remain in the class in all subsequent years until they pass the exam or graduate without a diploma. In response to this mandate, City created several new classes geared to teaching students to pass the exam. This development, then, had a second-

ary effect. Teachers commented that students who remain in the remedial class for a year and then pass the exam are not prepared to go into sophomore English; they need a transitional class that will help them learn the ninth grade material that they missed while in the remedial class.

> The group that just passed the [exam] we've kept together because they can't be thrown into the regular textbook. Some are in the regular class due to program conflicts, and part of the problem is they need to go where they can be taken in. It really is an organizational challenge. When the other competencies come in, we'll have lots of troubles like this. (City/English)

In reality, the number of courses in the English department increased as a result of the exam; students and teachers, however, do not have any greater choices. In fact, students are sorted more finely than before by their level of academic achievement. Teachers may have less choice; some of them must teach the remedial classes which result from the adoption of the competency exams, not from teacher initiative.

The course options in Village also reflect the emphasis on basics, but the source of this return to basics is different than in the first two schools. In Urban, teachers initiated the course changes with the direction of the department chairperson and the support of the principal; in City, the changes came about because of the need to respond to the requirements of a state-adopted competency program; in Village, the course option changes came about at the instigation of the principal in response to his desire for more schedule flexibility in his small school. In response to his need for more flexibility in scheduling electives for students, the principal of Village suggests a "new" approach to the English curriculum, that would all but eliminate electives.

He suggested that the English curriculum be non-graded, with all students taking the same class each year. Thus, with three years of required English, all students would take Cycle 1 the first year, Cycle 2 the second year, and so forth. Teachers applaud this approach, not only because it does free up the schedule, but because it responds to what they also see as the students' need for more basic skills.

> This year our focus is on the American Lit part of the core curriculum. We all teach American Lit, grades 9 through 11. It's unique in [the state] and I like it. It's based on the assumption that kids' English problems are not based on grade but on their background. Kids are in more need of basic English than ever before. We're picking up the backwash from the frills courses that were all over a few years ago. A lot of our kids--maybe a third to a quarter of the kids--weren't here last year. They come in with all sorts of messy backgrounds. (Village/English)

> We used to have tons of electives. Now we're going back to basics and I like it. No more oriental philosophy to fulfill English requirements. Most of the time I have to spend on writing and grammar anyway. (Village/English)

These three examples of course option changes that result in fewer choices for students and teachers are interesting in the way in which they are tied to the changing ideas about schooling that are around in the society. The changes are responsive to the public pressure for basic skills education. In spite of the different sources that initiated the changes in each school, the result is similar: it is to reduce options. Thus, changing definitions of education have a heavy impact on the course options in the schools and on the perceptions that teachers and administrators share about the focus of their work with students.

When we look at participation patterns in these three schools, we see that in two of the schools, Urban and Village, teachers were intimately

involved in working together to accomplish the curriculum changes necessary to implement the new courses. The source of the changes, the department in Urban and the principal in Village, does not seem to be related to teachers' satisfaction or participation. In both schools, teachers shared the goals of the changes and participated in that part of the change that most affected their lives: the content of the curriculum and the distribution of students. This was not the case in City. There, teachers had to respond to a mandate that came from outside of the school. While they may have agreed that students need more of an emphasis on basic skills, they had little role in shaping the course options that responded to those beliefs. Teachers in City do not talk about their role in working together to shape the curriculum and courses in ways that reflect their concerns. Instead, they talk about the lack of coordination and the difficulty of scheduling students into appropriate classes as a result of the mandated exam. Teachers have made no attempt to develop a set curriculum for this course; nor do they see any reason to do so. The remedial classes seem to have been set into the existing structure of the school; but they also seem to be outside of the regular focus of the English department. This may be a function of the source of this curriculum change; it is a mandated response to a mandated competency exam.

The effects of the national concern with basic skills impinges on course options in ways other than those described. School districts have been voting to increase their graduation requirement. In Village's district, the school board has increased the amount of English, Social Studies, and Math required for graduation. Administrators comment that pressure to do this came from parents who saw that similar changes had been made in neighboring states. The pressure to go along with current educational

trends, then, influences the courses that are offered and which teachers then teach. It is obvious that given the fixed number of teaching periods in a school day, increases in English, Social Studies, and Math requirements must decrease the time that students have for electives. Changing graduation requirements are direct bureaucratic controls on teachers' work.

> The biggest hassle [about the increased requirements] was from the teachers on which courses to require. The people in Foreign Language felt it took away from them. They raised a fuss about it but there wasn't anything that they could do. (Village/Principal)

There are also less direct effects on course options. In City's community, the state university accepts many of City's graduates. In recent years, the university faculty have been complaining that students' reading and writing skills are weak. They blame this on high schools that allow students to use courses such as Journalism, Fantasy, and even Foreign Language, to fulfill their English requirements. Representatives of the university recently met with high school principals to inform them that, although the high schools may accept these courses for graduation, the university is thinking of requiring more standard (basic) courses for admissions. This will undoubtedly have a direct effect on what the high schools require for graduation. However, it is not a bureaucratic control. It is a control from the environment by virtue of the way in which the high schools and the university are informally linked.

Changing ideas about education, then, result in a variety of pressures from within and outside the formal structure of the school system. They are interconnected in that they are all responses to the same set of perceptions that are current in the society. They impinge on the high schools from a variety of directions and have an impact on the courses that a

school offers. From the departments that we studied, there does not seem to be a tension between basics and diversity. Few people ever mention the virtues of diversity; they speak instead of the necessity for basic skills and the excesses of choice.

School Size

School size can be related to the diversity of courses and programs in a school, although as we will see, size alone will not explain the differences among these schools. In our sample, we have two small schools, Village and Suburban, that provide different course options. Both schools require English, but Village has a core course that all must take, while Suburban offers an array of courses that fulfill the requirement. The same differences in the number of courses is seen in the Social Studies department. More than in the basic subjects, however, it is in the area of electives and vocational training that the two schools differ. Suburban has a wide range of special programs, work opportunities, college credit courses, vocational training, and independent studies. Village has few electives, no college credit courses, and very limited vocational training. Students' comments reflect the real differences that exist in the two schools. Students in Village find the electives limited:

> It's a small school and selection is small, but I didn't want much that it doesn't have. It doesn't have a lot of variety; it doesn't have things like knitting [laughter]. They have only one shop for everything and that's got cramped quarters and it's hard to schedule. At (my old school), there was a management course and some stuff about hotel management that you could really use, but not here. (Village/12 grade boy) (This student has the opportunity to transfer to a larger school with more options but rejected it because of the sense of community in the smaller school.)

> I wanted shorthand, but there is not shorthand because not enough people signed up. Lots of girls come up here from big schools where they have modeling and disco and that stuff. All we have are cooking and sewing which are good for what they are, but they're not the other courses. (Village/10th-grade girl)

> I took geometry because there was nothing left to take. I did talk to the teacher first. I talked to the teacher about if I could pass and she said it depends and so I decided to take it. They don't have photography or other things you can use. They only have teaching assistant or working in the office. Big schools have a lot more choice. (Village/11th grade girl)

> Personally, I don't think there's enough. I'd like a class that goes specifically into how you act. Not direction and stage managing, too. I don't get along with the teachers. And it [drama class] will be discontinued because no one else wants to take it. The drama club may not continue either because the teacher got worn out during Li'l Abner this year. (Village/9th-grade girl)[1]

In Suburban, there is a wider range of electives in all areas. In addition to the work-study programs, the experienced-based career education program, and the college level courses, students indicated that they had the opportunity for independent study.

> Well, maybe they should have a religion course, but I could have set up an independent study. I'm getting a credit for my guitar as an independent study. It went through [a local music teacher] and I will get a grade. I almost did a taxidermy independent study in a different school and we may still do it. There's plenty

[1] It is interesting that none of the students ever commented that they would prefer more of a choice in the basic academic subjects in this school. No one suggested that they should have a choice in their English classes. It seems that the academic requirements are a given, an accepted part of the structure that is not questioned. Students confined their thinking about choices to those subjects in which they already exercised some choice.

> of opportunity in every subject for anything you want. (Suburban/11th-grade boy)
>
> The electives are good. Like Wood tech. I made a coffee table a couple of months ago, and made a stereo cabinet, and I'm working on a bench. There's advanced woodworking and carpentry . . . . They give you a sheet with all these courses, and I pick . . . . Like you need four years of English, so I pick some that interest me. (Suburban/10th-grade girl)
>
> I'm going to be a musician, play the guitar. They have music classes, and like, they're pretty good. (Suburban/10th-grade boy)

The contrasts between the students' comments in the two schools are interesting beyond the differences that they point out about their perceptions of options. Students in Village speak about their school being small; they contrast it with larger schools that exist in the district, and are aware of options in those schools that they do not have. Students in Suburban on the other hand, never mention the size of their school as a factor in their options. Nor do they note neighboring larger schools with which they compare their programs. It's interesting to reflect on this distinction for the teachers as well. In Village, teachers and the principal talk about the limitations that size can bring to the school, they revised their English curriculum in order to reduce the impact of size and permit students greater choice in their electives. In Suburban, the academic teachers did not talk about school size (one counselor did mention that there were scheduling problems due to size). They are able to work around their size to schedule an array of basic as well as elective courses.

We did not investigate the details of each school's scheduling process so we cannot report on where the difficulties in Village occur and why they do not happen in Suburban. Further, there seems to be another explanation for the differences in the school that goes beyond absolute size. The peo-

ple in these two schools have different conceptions of what their high school is; they do not share a common image of their high schools. The differences in their images seem to account for at least some of the differences in their course offerings.

Definitions of the Schools

In Village, the faculty believe that they are expected to provide academic education for students who for the most part will attend college. Teachers may disagree about whether all of the students should attend college but they know that most of them will, and that the community expects the high school to prepare their children accordingly. Further, administrators and teachers tend to agree that the high school should not duplicate the courses that a college will offer. Thus, there are no Advanced Placement courses offered in Village. Such courses would violate the boundaries between the high schools and the colleges. "We don't give college courses, and they [the colleges] don't give high school courses," said one administrator. There are similar explanations for the lack of vocational education in the school. Teachers and counselors suggest that the community does not feel that the role of the high school is to provide such training.

> The vocational program is skimpy but that's the mandate of the community. [The people who want it are silent and transient.] They have academic problems, but we don't hear their voices because they're transitional. The community doesn't think of these kids. (Village/Assistant Principal)

> With the exception of drafting, we offer no skills for a trade. We don't meet the needs of kids who aren't going on to college. We just provide a well-rounded education for college-bound students. (Village/Social Studies)

> Our weakest area is Voc Ed. There's only an auto theory course . . . . But a lot of kids get training from the parents in the community. They can get good training on the job, and the unions aren't strong and so kids can get jobs there. They can work for a carpenter and learn all of the skills that they need and become a regular trained carpenter. (Village/Guidance Counselor)

The definition of the school, then, seems to be an important determinant of the kinds of options and programs that the school offers. That definition is formed by the attitudes and values of the people in the community in conjunction with those who work in the school. Village is responsive to those attitudes and values. The administration and the staff know that the school is not providing some students with opportunities from which they might benefit, but there is not pressure for them to do so. No one is asking them to provide vocational training. What is more, without community support for such training, schoolpeople cannot unilaterally create the program. It would not be seen as responsive.[2]

In Suburban, the administration is in the process of creating a new image for the high school. Several years ago, the school board became disenchanted with the lack of direction in the school system. They hired a new superintendent and principal and gave them a mandate to improve the schools; to bring them up-to-date. In the eyes of the superintendent and principal, up-to-date includes providing a wide range of options for students and keeping the school highly visible. They, then, are involved in creating a definition for the high school. As part of that process, they

---

[2]The actual availability of training in the environment should not be ignored. As the guidance counselor notes, there are opportunities for vocational training in the community. Therefore, the school need not play such a dominant role in this field as it might in areas in which there are not training opportunities.

try to make the community aware of what they want the school to be while being responsive to the community's conceptions of high school. Unlike Village, this image of high school includes more than academic training. It includes an emphasis on academic excellence but also stresses alternative programs, work options, and an image of the school as a vibrant place. The superintendent suggests that in this district there is only minimal support for academic achievement. Thus, unlike Village where that is the thrust of the community, the principal and superintendent must find ways to create that support.

> Academically, the kids get a lot of attention from teachers. Within the peer group, the kid has to be low key about academics because the community doesn't support high academic achievement. It's a question of leadership and a classic dilemma . . . . I personally have the enthusiasm and the sense that we're growing and moving. It was a middle of the road school system. I don't know if we've moved beyond that, but we've laid the groundwork to move out. In five years, we'll be one of the more recognized school systems in the state. (Suburban/Superintendent)

In Suburban, as in Village, it is necessary to respond to the images that the community holds. At the present time, the community wants the school to be important and outstanding. If it can be convinced that an innovation will support or lead to that goal, then it will support it. The newly hired media specialist pointed out the way in which those in the school use this community interest.

> A lot of my job is PR. I go around to the other systems and get a sense of how their media centers run. I made a comparative dollar study, and it makes [us] look bad. Most towns spend $6,000 only on books. We spend $2,000 on books, periodicals, so forth. The board asked me if it was a bad as it looks on paper, and I said 'it's worse.' They're concerned about that. (Suburban/Media Specialist)

This concern resulted in the board approving a large sum of money to equip the media center with language labs. The media specialist says he will soon receive more money for books as well.

Suburban, then, is a school in the middle of the process of redefining itself. That new definition must conform to the image that the public has, but as those in the school are aware, they have the opportunity to shape that image. The image of the school that the community comes to support will have considerable impact on the options and opportunities that the school can provide for its students.[3] These options and opportunities will affect teachers' work.

It is important, then, to understand more about a school than its size. In Suburban, there is a sense within the community that the school board has the responsibility to provide education broadly defined; in Village, the community holds a more limited view of the role of the school. One must be careful, therefore, in relating diversity and responsiveness to student needs. If one looked at the absolute number of courses in these two schools, one might conclude that Village was less responsive to the needs of its students. If one took the views of the two communities into account, the conclusion would be different.

---

[3]Those who work in the high school, tend to focus on the image-making concerns and activities of the principal. Those who do not share the principal and superintendent's view that community support is crucial to the survival and growth of the school, see these activities as indications that the administration is "under the thumb" of the community. This leads teachers to cynicism and a lack of support for the administration. The administration in this system seems to have a greater understanding of the relation between the school and the community than do the teachers. It also seems unable to convince teachers that what they are doing has integrity.

Individual Influences on Course Options

We have been stressing broad pressures that come to influence course options in these high schools, but individuals also have an impact. Sometimes teachers are enthusiastic about a special area of their expertise and develop courses on the subject. We mentioned earlier the teacher who developed a folklore course in City. In Suburban, one of the teachers developed and introduced the Psychology and Sociology courses that are taught in the school. In Central, one of the teachers developed a first-year German course. If teachers have the interest and the time (generally their own) to develop courses, each of these schools affords them the opportunity to offer them as electives. Whether they get taught depends on the teacher's ability to generate enthusiasm and thereby enrollment.

In each of these schools, it is the principal who has a gatekeeping role in the process of adding new courses. The principal must be convinced initially that the new course has some potential benefit for the students and the school. Once convinced, the schools have slightly different procedures for incorporating the courses. Central has a process most tightly tied to the formal bureaucratic structure of the school system. The district superintendent there indicated that the principal must make a specific recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction who in turn has the authority to approve or reject the proposed course. If he accepts the recommendation, the district provides subject matter consultants who can assist the teachers in developing the curriculum. Then the teacher can offer the course to the students. Within this highly structured process, however, there seems to be room for maneuvering. For example, the principal indicated that he had a personal interest in the study of foreign languages and wanted to enlarge the Foreign Language department.

When he discovered that one of his teachers was qualified to teach German, he encouraged her to develop such a course and offer it to the students. The district was not involved in this process.

In City, the principal wanted to revitalize the Honors program because it is one that he likes and feels is important to the school's image. He did not need bureaucratic approval to re-emphasize this set of courses. By the same token, administrative discretion can also have the effect of removing a course or program from the school. Counselors in City complained that the principal disregarded some of their programs and gave them less time and space than they deserved. They felt that the principal's action was a function of his disdain for the programs, even though they were funded and mandated to be in the school.

In Suburban, the principal had previous training in Business Education. When he took over leadership of the high school, he emphasized the reorganization of courses in that department.

Thus, within the formal organization of the school, both principals and teachers do have the opportunity to influence course options through their own interests. The effects of these individual pressures are random; it may turn out that an unusual course is taught in a department because there is a teacher to teach it rather than because it is part of a rational plan to include the content of that subject in students' education. This possibility helps distinguish the schools from one another and gives them some personality. It provides an opportunity for teachers to express themselves within the borders of their own school. However, opportunities to teach exotic courses seem limited now due to the return to basics and declining enrollment. Both factors limit the array of courses that a school can support. However, given these constraints, it

is clear that the formal structure of the organization, through rules, regulations, and procedures does not prevent teachers and principals as individuals from influencing course options.

Individuals outside of the school can also influence what is taught. In City, parents are concerned about the lack of Chicano culture in the school curriculum. They have suggested a course to deal with that subject. In Suburban, parents are concerned with drug and alcohol abuse; they may press for a course related to that issue. The schools may not necessarily comply, but administrators indicated that these pressures exist and, at times, result in the development of a new course.

Integrating New Courses

What seems clear from conversations with teachers and administrators is that the source of the pressure for course options has a great deal to do with the mode of incorporation into the school. Those course changes that are initiated within the school and are seen as responsive to teachers' and students' needs seem better integrated than those imposed from outside. Thus, the set of English courses in Urban affects every aspect of the English department; they are a coordinated set of courses. On the other hand, there are several programs in the English department that have resulted from the sudden appearance of money. Title I money became available during the past year in Urban. The money meant that a special class was required for those students who qualified for special help under this Title. The class was set up and students were reassigned from their regular classes to the Title I class. But this class is outside of the mainstream of the English department. One teacher said that the content of the class is not coordinated with the content of the basic English curriculum. Similarly, local funds led to the creation of a reading

clinic. Again, this part of the English department is uncoordinated with the rest of the program. The reading teacher responsible for the program indicated that this lack of formal articulation didn't really matter because she and the regular teachers tended to go over the same material. Thus, the special funding was not used to develop a special program but perhaps to allow teachers to continue to do the kind of teaching that they were doing anyway. Further, the Title I money provided a way to relieve overcrowding in the reading clinic: fifty students who had been scheduled for the reading clinic were eligible for Title I. They were removed from the reading clinic thus taking the pressure off some of the reading teachers.

In Central, there was a center for computer assisted instruction that served as a supplementary skill building course for some students. It helped them with reading skills. None of the English teachers interviewed knew anything about this program or which of their students might be in it.

It is not possible to make a causal connection between the source of a course option, from within or outside the school, and the extent to which it is integrated into the general curriculum. But it is clear that teachers express more enthusiasm and ownership of those courses that they developed themselves. In the cases of mandated courses that we reviewed, teachers tended to use the courses as opportunities to re-group students, while continuing to focus on their core curriculum. (There were no examples in this group of high schools in which teachers in the Social Studies or Foreign Language departments had to respond to mandated new courses that arose out of special funding.)

Summary

There are many factors that influence course options in a school. The

bureaucratic structure at the level of the state and the district determines the graduation requirements. This determines the distribution of time on subject matter for the core of the curriculum, which in turn sets the framework within which the remaining decisions can be made. Given that the number of hours in the school day is fixed, changes in time on one part of the core requirements results in changes in other parts as well. It is within this structure of fixed time that teachers, principals, parents, students, funding agencies, and various other pressure groups attempt to influence the course options in a school. When we think of the bureaucratic structure as a framework, we must think of it as one that is both rigid and yet quite permeable to influences from a variety of sources.

In the face of the myriad influences on course options that we have described, one might think that the schools were subject to diverse and contradictory pressures. On the contrary, we were struck by the uniformity of the pressure for change regardless of its source. At the current time, virtually all pressures converge to reduce options and emphasize the development of agreed upon basic skills. These pressures increase the power and influence of the English departments, and they tend to undermine further the power and influence of a department such as Foreign Language, whose definition as a basic skill is questionable. It is not the bureaucratic structure alone, but the structure in combination with multiple pressures from a variety of sources that is resulting in more limited influence and control for some teachers.

When we consider the relationships between course options and teachers' work, it becomes clear that absolute number of choices is not a meaningful unit of analysis. Teachers have fewer different courses to teach

now than they did several years ago, yet they do not sound disappointed by the changes. The current arrangement, unlike the earlier one, allows them a greater sense of control over the students and the curriculum. Collegial agreement on a structured curriculum and homogeneously grouped students work to reduce some of the ambiguities and uncertainties involved in teaching. They also reduce the anxiety of working in isolation. In schools such as Village and Urban in which teachers feel that they have effectuated the changes themselves, they sound most satisfied with the outcomes. In City, where the changes were initiated outside of the school, even though teachers like the results, they do not sound as involved or enthusiastic as teachers in the other two schools. Further, although they like the sorting of students involved in the new course options, they do not share the rewards of collegial involvement in the development of the curriculum. They are still working alone but with a more restricted set of courses.[4]

Teacher involvement with the initiation of course changes seems also to be related to the way in which the changes are implemented within the department. When course options develop out of a perceived consensus within a department, they appear to result in an integrated, coordinated set of options for teachers and students. Course changes that are mandated from outside of the school seem to be incorporated less fully; teachers seem to re-shuffle students into courses without trying to make the courses an integral part of their own system. The addition of Title I classes in Urban and the creation of remedial classes in City seem like

[4] In contrast, teachers who teach the honors and advanced placement courses have worked closely to coordinate their courses. Their comments, presented in a later chapter, more closely resemble those of the English teachers in Urban and Village.

such a re-shuffling. Teachers say that they have not developed new curriculum to go along with the new course titles; it is unlikely that they are teaching what they would have taught anyway. This is quite different than the comments of teachers who are involved in the initiation, planning, and implementation of course changes.

Although the current trends have benefitted the English departments, they have had equivocal effects in Social Studies and a decidedly negative effect in Foreign Languages. In Village, for example, the state change in graduation requirements has increased the number of required courses in the department, but it has also reduced the chances that teachers will teach a state history course that they like. The change was made outside of the school and the teachers were uninvolved. In addition, the combined effect of increases in English and Social Studies requirements is to reduce the time that students have available to take a Foreign Language course. Foreign Language teachers are hurt by the changes in graduation requirements. Department control over teacher assignment, then, is affected by changes in other departments. In a sense, this suggests that the links are quite tight between the parts of the structure: given the fixed length of the school day, manipulations in one part of the schedule have a direct effect on other parts. Individual teachers have little control over these changes. The sense of powerlessness particularly pervades the Foreign Language teachers' comments. Not only do bureaucratic decisions outside of the school influence their options, principal decisions within the school have been shown to minimize their control over what they teach.

Given the set of constraints that develop as a function of changes in course options, teachers work to influence their assignments. With

little opportunity to change the structure of the schools, they emphasize the systems of seniority and equity that make the distribution of courses and students respond to their own preferences. Depending on department membership and principal control, choices may be quite broad or limited. Although the principal may influence the course options and the teacher assignment, he too, like the teachers, operates within the constraints of the system. His actions tend to reinforce both the status of the various departments that is determined by the allocation of time on subject at the top of the hierarchy, and the traditions of seniority and equity developed by the teachers.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR TEACHERS' WORK

Once teachers have been assigned to their courses and students, the parameters of their work have been defined. Yet the formal organization has the potential for further influence. The school administration can attempt to control the content and organization of the curriculum through text selection, lesson plans and curriculum guides. It can also attempt to use meetings, rules and procedures to control teachers' instructional and non-instructional work. Although the span has narrowed considerably from the broad issues of course assignment and options, the potential for bureaucratic control and coordination of each individual teachers' work is still great. The schools differ in the extent to which this potential is realized.

Three of the schools, Village, City, and Central, are located in states with rational, bureaucratic state textbook adoption procedures that are designed to limit teachers' choices. In each of these schools the formal procedure has a slightly different impact on the teachers. In Village and City teachers suggest that they can choose the books that they want in spite of the adoption procedure; there are formal as well as informal ways in which they can select alternate texts. In Central the formal adoption system acts as a greater constraint: teachers indicated that there is not a legitimate way for them to request an alternate basic text. They may, however, use supplementary materials and there are only cursory checks on their actual use of the required text.

The adoption procedure in these three schools seems to function as a control and as a public statement of accountability, relaying the message that the school district is monitoring the content and quality of the

curriculum. The formal control, though, is often at odds with teachers' beliefs that they should have the authority to exercise their professional judgment in selecting materials for their students. At times the tension between organizational control and professional autonomy gets resolved through the various legitimate and illegitimate methods devised to avoid the adopted texts; at other times it remains festering. As with the process of assignment, teachers' ability to influence the texts with which they teach is associated with departmental membership. Foreign Language teachers lack status and influence and therefore have less control over their books than do teachers in the English and Social Studies departments.[1]

Regardless of the presence of formal adoption procedures, teachers indicated that choosing materials was an ambiguous process and that the formal committees are ill-designed to address this reality. Teachers say that the only way to choose a book is to use it and "see how it works"; none of the systems really allows a teacher that opportunity.[2] Thus while the formal adoption procedures may address the public's need for accountability, they do not address the teachers' needs: they do not provide teachers with better materials than do selection processes that are less bureaucratic. On the contrary, teachers complain that having to adopt one book for a district often results in teaching with materials that do not meet the needs of their particular students. To the extent

---

[1] Urban and Suburban do not have formal text adoption procedures, and teachers talked about making decisions individually or as a department, depending on their own need. They reported only budgetary constraints on the materials that they obtained, although this constraint can be a function of bureaucratic decisions and/or departmental status.

[2] Both Village and City approach the reality of a trial period by permitting some teachers to request a text for only one year. This is the exception, however, rather than the rule.

that this is true, in districts like Central in which adoption is controlling, or in the less influential departments within the other schools, teachers are seriously constrained in their ability to exercise their judgment. They suggest that this kind of control is detrimental to the students as well as disturbing to themselves.

Lesson plans, unlike the text adoption procedures, seem to function only as public accountability devices; instead of controlling and coordinating teachers' work, they serve as evidence of planning and administrative control. While teachers may well write plans and outlines for their own use, the administrative check on these plans is unrelated to what they do in their classrooms. Curriculum guides are even less of a presence than lesson plans. Therefore, we suggest that both of these mechanisms serve multiple purposes in the schools. They do remind teachers that they are in a subordinate role in the authority hierarchy and that the administrative level of that hierarchy can check on their work. Lesson plans and curriculum guides then are a symbol of potential administrative control. They also reinforce the pedagogical belief that teaching should be well-organized. They represent these beliefs to the public in much the same way; they indicate rational planning and control of instruction. However, the structure of each school system and the personal style of the principal can have a dramatic impact on whether these coordination mechanisms remain in the background or emerge into the foreground of the school. Their actual use as control mechanisms, then, varies.

We suggest, along with Meyer and Rowan (1977) and others, that these formal procedures play an important role in maintaining the legitimacy of schools. Much like graduation requirements and the division of school

into semesters, programs, and courses, text selection procedures, lesson plans, and curriculum guides are expected parts of school organization. The elaboration of the formal structure helps to maintain the definition of a high school. This is not to ignore the actual controlling effect of these mechanisms in some schools; it is to broaden our understanding of their impact and importance to the schools, the teachers, and the public.

When we turned to rules, meetings, and procedures, we heard one overwhelming response in every school and across departments. Teachers said that there were few if any rules governing their behavior, that they were involved to varying degrees on committees, that meetings were infrequent and inconsequential for instructional work, but that student attendance was the focus of a large number of rules and procedures. Given this emphasis, we have limited this section to a brief review of meetings and committees, and have focused primarily on the issue of student attendance.

Undoubtedly, poor attendance, both absenteeism and class-cutting, gets at the heart of the school's authority to control students. It has always been a major concern. But we suspect that the current emphasis on attendance, much like the return to basics, is the result of the public's renewed interest in the problem and is at times unrelated to its actual magnitude. We have reached this conclusion after relating the reality of the attendance problem in each of the schools to the amount of concern voiced about it. It is understandable, for example, that Central and Urban, which have decidedly serious absentee and drop-out problems, would direct many rules and procedures toward improving attendance; it is less understandable to find this emphasis at City, where the Superinten-

dent said that average attendance is 94%. We know that the focus on attendance highlights a real problem and concern. But in addition, the real problem in some schools has created a social climate in which all schools feel under some obligation to pay attention to attendance and to express this publicly. Attendance has been defined as a problem and communities want to know what their schools are doing to respond. Therefore all of the schools are doing something about attendance, regardless of whether it is in fact a major problem.

Attempting to enforce attendance rules, regardless of the seriousness of the problem, brings out incipient role conflicts. Not only does it refocus attention on compulsion, it sets teachers, counselors and administrators into conflict over the enforcement of rules. Teachers do not want to spend their time keeping track of students; counselors cannot keep track of them unless teachers accurately keep attendance records and write referrals; and all three groups agree that parents have little interest or influence in getting their children to attend school when they do not want to. Rules about attendance then generate strong feelings that influence how teachers feel about their work and their colleagues. In a school like Urban, in which the principal has exerted a strong hand in controlling student attendance, there is less conflict and more teacher support for the rules and regulations. In schools such as Suburban in which attendance is an issue, but in which there is no agreement about how to proceed, there is much tension, anxiety and hostility toward the rules and the administration. Teachers feel that the principal is abdicating from his responsibility to support them; the principal feels that teachers should take more of a role in enforcing the rules that do exist. We are tempted to conclude that teacher satis-

faction in a school, and a sense of unity in a school, has a great deal to do with the ability of the administration to control students. Teachers prefer a school in which the principal and other members of the administration take a strong stand on student attendance and provide the moral and practical leadership to implement the rules. This leadership enables them to focus on their own interest: teaching.

We begin then with a discussion of the bureaucratic mechanisms that are designed to control and coordinate teachers' work in the classroom: textbook selection procedures, lesson plans, and curriculum guides. This section is followed by a shift in perspective: the teacher in the school as a unit rather than in the individual classroom. To accomplish this shift, we focus on meetings, committees, and enforcement of attendance rules for students.

TEXT SELECTION

Schools with State Level Adoption Procedures

Teachers in City, Central, and Village select their textbooks in accordance with formal state and local adoption procedures. These begin with state level committees that make the initial selection of texts in each subject. Teachers noted that this initial selection is not constraining; the state committee chooses large numbers of books. Teachers in each district then choose books from the state list. In making their choices, teachers focus on local instructional needs.[3]

[3] In none of these schools were teachers or administrators able to articulate the criteria that are critical to selection at the state level. Nor did it seem important to them to know. In City and Village teachers mentioned that there might be controversial issues to which the state paid attention. These might be sex, labor unions, and the free enterprise system, for example.

The process of selecting texts. The formal adoption process at the district level was similar in the three schools. Teachers from the appropriate departments formed district-wide committees to consider samples of new texts. Different departments considered texts in different years. Teachers who participated on these committees were uniformly unenthusiastic about the process. It was not that the process was unimportant, because all of the teachers agreed that getting stuck with a poor text was awful. Nor was it that the committees had no authority; they did have the authority to select texts from a rather large list. They had access to the materials, and they had available representatives from the various publishing companies. Yet there was a pervasive sense of boredom and disinterest in the process.[4]

> They had a committee from this school to go to the district meetings and see the products on the state list. I was on that committee but I didn't make all the meetings because of some scheduling conflicts. The committee came back and reported to the teachers here at a department meeting. They could bring back the books from the district office and we had refreshments and sat around and looked at them. This took about two to three weeks. And then the teachers took a vote. (City/English)

> The book was chosen by the department and I don't like it. But I guess it also is my fault. I was too passive during the selction and I should have examined it more carefully. The book assumes that the kids have skills background that they don't have . . . . The problem is that the only way to choose is to use a book, not to look at it for an hour. (City/English)

> All of the teachers are looking at textbooks right now. They're looking for books that will deal with their theme areas. On Monday we'll sit down and decide what we want. We're not going to choose only one book; we'll choose different books for the different levels. The teachers

[4]Most comments are from English teachers. They had the most to say about selection as they are currently involved in selecting new materials.

> have coordinated their themes and what will be covered, and we'll try to find a book for that. (Village/English)

The second teacher's comment suggests a reason why teachers are not enthusiastic about the process. Text selection is portrayed as a rational process in which teachers sit down, peruse some materials, consider the qualities of the materials, talk to sales people, and then make a sensible decision. Yet teachers do not find this rational way of selecting materials useful or productive. They prefer to use a book before judging it, or they like to rely on the experience and advice of other teachers.

> When I need a book, I just call a friend in the district. I don't preview a book or read them. I don't have the time. I need to use a book in order to decide . . . . Also, we're developing a new curriculum and how do you know how to choose? How do you know how it's going to end up? This year, we're going to end up with three different literature books for the three different levels. How do you find a book for each of the levels that deals with the six themes that we've developed for the English course? (Village/English)

The willingness of some teachers to rely on the expert judgment of a teacher or administrator was expressed in another story from Village. Teachers there had selected a book for their new English curriculum. After using it for a year, they felt that they had made a mistake. The building principal made the choice for the second-year text.

> We blew it the first year. We came in and looked at books and chose one, but it's at too low a level. This year (the principal) just picked a book and it arrived and it's great. (Village/English)

This teacher is not concerned about control. She wants a book that she likes, and is willing to have the principal or another teacher make that selection, if they pick the right book. (One wonders, of course, what the teacher would have said had the principal picked a book that she dis-

liked.) The point seems to be that text selection is not as rational as the formal procedure suggests. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the process and teachers prefer to trust expert advice and past practice rather than a rational process in selecting their books. The formal participation structure does not respond to that preference.

Working with the system. Within the various schools, staff members saw the formal procedures differently. In City, the central office administrator in charge of curriculum reported that the district was tightening up on the freedom that individual schools had to select their own texts from the district list; teachers on the text selection committees said that the current system allowed them more flexibility than ever before. Teachers also disagreed about how serious the district was in enforcing the bureaucratic procedure in the classroom. Teachers within the same departments often disagreed; when teachers in one department agreed, those in another department in the same school might see the situation quite differently.

> We don't throw away our old books, and if a teacher doesn't like the selection, they can use older books. We encourage them to change if they don't like it. (City/English)

Another English teacher in this department said she was struck with the required text. Still another said:

> I use my own books and don't follow the state books. I've found one [a book] that fits my needs. I didn't even look at the state list. It's the same for the junior class. I use a college text that meets my needs. Maybe the lady down in the storeroom checked it on a list, but I don't know. Now the district has adopted a set of books and we're supposed to use them in sophomore English, but I don't use them because when I was assigned the class they didn't have any more books left. [Laughter] (City/English)

In Village, one teacher noted that the district was selecting a new Soc-

ial Studies text for American History:

> [The district] picks the texts. I'm on the World History text committee and what we have is a fresh text. We want to put a fresh text in another Social Studies course too. [He went on to say that the district would adopt a fresh book and then that book would be used in all World History classes.] (Village/Social Studies)

Another teacher in the same department commented to the contrary:

> Social Studies is weird. They've never been able to get us to agree to a book. We all have different approaches and different methods. There are five high schools and four sets of books. I get to choose what I want. If it's not on the list then we write an evaluation and next year it is on the list. It's been no problem. I don't even think about it. (Village/Social Studies)

These comments suggest that the systems operate differently for different teachers and that teachers perceive the same system differently. As a result, individual teachers work within varying degrees of constraint. Their sense of control over their material is a function of the actual bureaucratic selection process and their perception of it.

Of these schools, Central had the most strictly enforced adoption procedure. Many teachers felt they had little choice in textbooks.

> I tried it for three years and now I've scrapped it and I provide my own material. The book is sitting in the book room and it's probably illegal, but I don't like it. (Central/Foreign Language and English)

This teacher went on to say that while her department chairperson knew that she had scrapped the book and did not mind, she doubted that the principal knew. Whether or not the principal would mind, this teacher felt that the school authorities want and expect her to use the adopted text, and she does not want the principal to know. This expectation, without any formal, direct control, was sufficient to cause the teacher to use a poor textbook for three years. Control from the district office in the form of a rule about textbooks, in this instance, is a power-

ful coordinating mechanism. Actual inspection is not necessary in order to achieve compliance. Another teacher, in talking about this district's emphasis on the required text, also mentioned the legal mandate to use the book, but the mandate was a bit weaker for this teacher.

> We are supposed to use it (the text), but we can substitute supplementary material; we can put it away in the closet to meet the legal requirements. (Cetral/English)

It would seem then that a rule can have the power to convince teachers that the district is serious about having them use a required text. However, the district does not know when a teacher becomes frustrated enough to finally reject the book. That action becomes a secret. Teachers in fact are isolated in their classrooms and probably could use alternate materials frequently. What is interesting is that they say that they tend to use the required text because they are expected to do so. These teachers recognize the administrative directive as legitimate and controlling and they attempt to comply.

There were teachers in this school who did not conform to the rules, and they talked more fully about ways to avoid using the required text. The most popular method was to use supplementary materials from the media center. One teacher demonstrated considerably more initiative. He said that he had gotten materials from the department budget, from the English coordinator for the district, and from having a paperback book sale in the school that benefitted the English department. Nowadays, such sales are frowned on by the district office, although he noted that they weren't yet prohibited. Both Village and City have less restrictive text systems in that each incorporates formal methods to circumvent the system.

Administrators in City and Village talked about options and exceptions to the formal selection procedure:

> All basic texts must go through the state, but it's easy to use something not on their list. They [a school] make an appication for a pilot [test] and we [one of the superintendents] would approve or disapprove the application. Then it goes to the state and they approve or disapprove the application. They [the school] go and use the book and do an evaluation. We've never disapproved and the state has never disapproved. (Village/Central Administrator)

> We can get around the state list if we want to take full responsibility for the books. We can buy 25 books and declare them supplemental . . . . It's a risk because a lawsuit [if any parent objects to the book] comes directly to the school. This is something to consider because north of here the John Birch Society is pretty strong. We need the protection of the state. (City/Assistant Principal)

The assistant principal said that the school had purchased books in this way, but that they were careful in making those decisions to check the books for potentially controversial material. There were no other criteria to consider. This comment, along with the earlier list of state adoption concerns, suggests that the adoption procedure is a safeguard for the school, one that protects it from outraging various communities, and thereby losing its respect and legitimacy.

Although teachers in City and Village talked about ways of asserting their professional opinion and influencing that formal authority hierarchy, they also indicated that administrators can apply personal pressure to teachers. One of the Social Studies teachers hinted at this pressure. He began by saying:

> We are guided by the state textbook list. Every five years this can be replaced. I've never found a problem with material, especially with the advanced placement class. I can order supplemental materials whenever I want through the media center and then my students use them. Only sometimes are there budget problems. I've never complained about materials. (City/Social Studies)

But while he has never complained, this teacher has on occasion wanted to use a book that was not adopted by the school or the state. Whether or not he chose to speak to the principal about replacing a basic adopted text depended, he said, on his assessment of the vice principal. The vice principal then exercises control over teacher discretion. During the present year, for example, this teacher reported that he had not liked the new edition of the history text that they were adopting and had thought about continuing to use the older edition. However, he said that the vice principal convinced him that the newer edition was more up-to-date. He agreed to use the new books. This is personal rather than bureaucratic control and it may be important more often than teachers admit.

Administrators do respect teachers' involvement in the selection process, and acknowledge assisting teachers in obtaining the materials they request. There was even the suggestion at Village that the principal would protect or act as a buffer between the teachers and the central administration if the teachers objected to using certain required materials. One teacher in Village commented that the district is changing grammar programs and that he objects, for professional reasons, to the new approach and the new materials.

> The county is trying to force us to adopt a grammar book. (The principal) wants us to have a grammar book for the kids to take home. I'll do it if he wants, but I don't like it. The district is going to a traditional Latin grammar and I won't do it. That's not the way to teach. We have a generative program that we can teach to the kids in three weeks. I think one day I'm going to publish it as a book myself. But there was a parent pressure after a poor set of books were chosen to pick a new book and teach the kids grammar. The new series was adopted and we're going to be using it now. (Village/English)

The comment here indicates that the authority to insist that this

teacher use the new materials comes to him from the principal and not from the administrators at the county level. If the principal wants him to use the book, then he will do it; if not, he will probably not use it. This seems to be another instance of personal power, derived from the teachers' regard for the principal. The other interesting point here is that this teacher does not see the principal insisting on the book for instructional reasons; he wants a "book for the kids to take home." The book is for the parents to see so that they will know that the school is teaching grammar. The book is symbolic of the school's responsiveness, and the teacher accepts the need for this kind of act.

The principal, on the other hand, sees the pressure to use the grammar book as more than a response to parental pressure. He sees it as part of the growing tendency toward centralization and feels that it is a function of size. He said that there is more concern with curriculum in general as the district grows but that he has doubts about the efficacy of this approach:

> The bigger we get, the more requirements we have. I worry a lot about standards . . . . As the district grows there's a greater effort to centralize control and this takes away from some of the autonomy that has existed. (Village/Principal)

From his point of view, local determination of the specific ways in which general curriculum guides should be interpreted is very important, and he allows his teachers latitude to teach as they wish. Increasing pressures toward uniformity run counter to his professional judgment. They also constrain his ability to make curriculum decisions. While there is a tendency toward greater centralization, so far he has been able to resist it. This preserves his and his teachers' autonomy.

There is overt concern for the uniqueness of the teachers and stu-

dents in Village and City, and this is reflected in part through the structure that grants teachers formal authority to reject the state selections and make decisions of their own. Teachers are expected to use judgment so that they will not arouse controversy with their materials, but they are given the formal authority to exercise that professional judgment. This is not the case in Central. There, teachers are expected to use the materials that are selected for the school. The formal structure does not invest them with authority to obtain texts of their own choosing.

In City, not only teachers, but also individual parents are able to request changes in their children's books. At the beginning of each course, teachers send home a form indicating all of the materials they will assign. If parents object to some of the material for any reason, the teacher will develop a new assignment for the student. Students have the option to do the same.

> We send parents a list of what will be covered at each grade level and in each of the subject areas. If the parents have something in the curriculum that they don't want their children to have, then they have an option to have their kids not read something on the list and the teacher will make a substitution . . . . At the high school, parents also have the right to have the reading materials changed, but as a way of letting teachers have a free choice of materials, as a way of diffusing groups of people. (City/Central Administrator)

The principal revealed that very few parents actually take advantage of the opportunity to request a change for their children, but that when they do, the response and the change is immediate. Another administrator confirmed that giving individual parents the right to object and have material changed for their children gives teachers more freedom in developing their courses. Teachers do not have to find materials that

will offend no one. This gives them greater flexibility in the kinds of materials that they choose.[5]

One teacher spoke of the way in which students, too, can influence the materials they use.

> If they don't want to read it [a book], we'll choose another. It's the same thing for a book that's too hard. In the sophomore English class we were reading the Mayor of Casterbridge, and many students chose another book to read, but it was because they're lazy. We read five chapters together and then even the good readers chose an easier book because they just didn't want to work so hard. (City/English)

While teachers do not object to changing a book for ideological reasons or when they feel it is too difficult for a student, this teacher suggests that the potential for abuse exists and occasionally arises.

It's interesting to speculate on why systems that have formal adoption procedures might also have formal procedures that permit teachers to avoid using the adopted texts. Perhaps the system reflects the tension between authority and responsibility vested in the formal structure of the administrative system and authority vested in the expertise of the teaching staff. Perhaps the formal adoption procedure is a safeguard not only to develop baseline standards, but also to assure sensitivity to parents' concerns about potentially controversial issues. In this sense, text selection might appropriately be thought of as a statement of responsibility to the public as well as a formal control on teachers' work.

Departmental status and text availability. When we discussed teach-

---

[5] Encouraging parents to make complaints as individuals should not be construed only as a cynical attempt to ward off the formation of pressure groups. Although it may have that effect in some instances, in the social context in which City operates, there is great regard for the individual. The formal opportunity to request a change for an individual child must be seen as part of the school's responsiveness to the culture in which it operates.

er assignment, departmental membership was seen as a significant factor in determining the extent to which teachers could influence their assignments. Teachers in Foreign Language departments in all of the schools reported having a very limited influence on their assignments even when teachers in the English departments had a great deal of influence and control. We were interested in whether this pattern of departmental influence would reappear in the process of textbook selection. Teachers in the Foreign Language departments do seem less influential than those in the English and Social Studies departments, but the differences do not seem as large as when we considered assignment. The most extreme difference in influence appears again in Village.

Teachers in the English and Social Studies departments in Village, for example, had all of the books that they wanted and were in the process of selecting additional materials. By contrast, teachers in the Foreign Language department complained about a lack of materials.

> There's a real lack of materials here. I have to bring my own personal tape recorder. There's no tape recorder here. I have only a first-year textbook and so I make up a lot of the material myself. I have requested a second-year book, but I don't know if I'll get it. I've threatened to ditto off the whole book if they don't get it for me. (Village/Foreign Language)

The other Foreign Language teacher wasn't as interested in texts as this teacher, but he confirmed their absence. These teachers have little control over the materials they use, not because the district dictates a particular text or content area, but because, in the budget decisions within the school, Foreign Language texts do not have a high priority. When the entire English curriculum is being revised and new materials are being purchased, it seems there is little money left for another department. This competition for scarce resources (time, money,

and students) is a theme that occurs in all of the schools across departments.

In City and Central, as in Village, there was dissatisfaction with materials in the Foreign Language department, but there was a difference. In Village, teachers were dissatisfied with the lack of materials; at City and Central, teachers were unhappy with the pedagogical approach of the text. In all three schools, they felt helpless to do anything about their plight. One teacher at City reported that she would have to use a poor book for five years, until the next selection was made. She admitted that she could supplement the text with other materials, but claimed that she could not substitute a different text. When asked whether anyone would check up on what text she was using, she said: "I'm not responsible to anyone. No one comes around and checks what I'm doing" (City/Foreign Language). In spite of the lack of supervision, she is unable to use a different text and continues to suffer with a poor one. Her perception of the constraints of the formal system is quite different than that of teachers in other departments. They participate in the formal selection process, but they know that they can use the formal system to get books that they want.

In Central, the Foreign Language teachers were also dissatisfied with the pedagogical approach of the required texts. They noted that there were differences in the backgrounds of students in the city; those in Central generally had some speaking knowledge of Spanish from their homes, although they might not be fluent. Teachers felt that they would like to have a book that built on their students' unique knowledge; the district book stressed formal grammar rather than spoken language. As in City, teachers said that they had to do the best they could with an

inappropriate text and supplementary materials.

It's possible that Foreign Language teachers are at a disadvantage because they are so few in many of these schools; they lack a core of people for mutual support and strength. Perhaps it's more difficult to manipulate the formal system without strong departmental backing. Foreign Language teachers are also vulnerable because of declining enrollment and declining interest in foreign languages. In a system in which teacher transfers are in part predicated by the need of the school for teacher services, a Foreign Language teacher may need to stay in the good graces of the administration in order to stay in the school. This may encourage them to comply with the formal rules, thereby becoming both more docile and more vulnerable to administrative directives.

Overview

In City and in Village, the formal adoption procedure sets limits on the texts that teachers consider for their courses. But both systems also have formal procedures with which teachers can avoid the adopted texts; teachers in both schools take advantage of these opportunities. Most of the teachers interviewed in City and Village do not feel that their professional expertise and authority is undermined by the selection process. They do suggest, however, that selecting a text is no easy matter, even if the formal procedure is well structured. In Central, the formal procedure is more of a presence and more of an obvious control on the teachers. They do not have a formal system that allows them to bypass the required texts, although some teachers do find ways to obtain other materials. In all three schools the procedure structures the situation within which teachers can act.

Individual personality also seems to play a role in a teacher's ability to change a required book. Some teachers in Central do not use the required test; others say they must. The system may allow some flexibility, but not all teachers perceive it. Some teachers feel more personal pressure from the "legal" requirement to use a book than do others. Comments from the various English teachers in City reveal the same pattern: teachers who say they must use the required text and others who say they need not use it. The differences in perception are more pronounced in the Foreign Language teachers.

It is difficult to draw more than tentative hypotheses about this phenomenon. We suggest that personality may play a role, but there is the possibility that individual teachers, like individual departments, do have different amounts of influence within the school. It may be that some teachers can get away with not using the required text and others cannot. Studying individual influence and power within a department was beyond the scope of this study, but it is likely to be a factor.

Schools Without Adoption Procedures

Teachers in Urban and Suburban select their texts and have them approved at the building level by the principal. Board approval is required in Suburban, but teachers and administrators agree that if the principal has approved the choice, then the board will also approve. Principals tend to support teacher decisions. Teachers see little in the process that constrains their choices.

> Instructors have flexibility. There are only budgeting limitations, and to some extent selections (of course materials) are controlled by your course load. You don't have time to go out and research fully the information that is out there. We have a source room that's old, but

> the opportunity is here. If I stay, I can replace what's there with what I want. (Suburban/English)

> I'm in the process of choosing new materials. To do this, I go to the department head's room and weed through them. Then I submit a list to him with the dollar amount. Technically, any books go to the School Board for approval, but I don't think it happens. The chairman can make suggestions to me, but we have a lot of leeway in what we order. (Suburban/English)

The chairperson of the Suburban English department remarked that there is no overt concern about controversial issues, although there is always the potential for a crisis:

> It's got some potential [controversy]. The community just doesn't know what's in the books. I teach Clockwork Orange. If they knew what was in it, they might be upset. (Suburban/English)

In the same vein, the chairperson of Social Studies said that she recalled an instance in which a parent, who was a member of the John Birch Society, requested a change in reading material. That request did not spark a controversy, however: different material was selected for that child and the parent was satisfied. It is interesting that these teachers, on the opposite side of the country from those in City and Village, and in a school without any formal controls on their text selection, are equally aware of the potential for arousing controversy in the community. When they think of constraints on their choices, they think of community values; they do not need a formal procedure to create that awareness. Further, their response to parental displeasure is the same as the response in City; it is to provide different material for the individual child. This suggests that the procedures are formal responses to community concerns perhaps designed to confirm the school's attention to specific values and beliefs. It may not be the cause, however, for teachers' sensitivity to those community concerns.

In Urban, there are myriad funding sources due to special programs. Teachers need not get approval on the content of the materials; they have to decide to which budget to charge their choices! The reading teacher at the high school spoke to this issue.

> We get a small dollar amount per child through the district [in addition to special funding in the department]. Also, I'm the reading coordinator for the school, the liaison person for the school, and I order materials. We order as little as possible on the English budget . . . . No one really approves what I get. It has to go through the principal, but he lets me get what I want. (Urban/English)

In addition to special funding sources, the English department has special status in the school. Not only does this give the department flexibility in scheduling, mentioned in other sections, but it provides them with money. The department chairperson commented that "money from other departments comes to me. This is off the record, but if they don't use their money, I get it" (Urban/English).

Selection is not routinized in these two districts as it is in the other three. Books are not automatically reviewed and replaced at the end of five years. This means that individual teachers or departments must assert initiative in requesting new books. In Urban, where the department emphasis is strong, teachers work together as a department to coordinate their text selections. In Suburban, the department consists of a large set of electives; teachers generally do very little coordinating in selecting their texts. However, at the moment, teachers in the Social Studies department at Suburban are working together. This collaboration was initiated by one of the teachers, though, and not by the department as a unit.

> Some of the texts are really out of date; we have an Economics text from 1969 and I don't care for it. I approa-

> ched the principal and said we needed some new books and he said that was a curriculum issue and decided that we should have some release time to work on curriculum revision. I must say, we've gotten a lot of support from him and the board on this. (Suburban/Social Studies)

Without any formal plan or system for selecting new books, it seems that teachers are quite dependent on the building administrator. Teachers make requests, but the principal has the decision-making authority to grant those requests. The teachers are obliged to convince the principal that it is important to place money in their department budgets to cover the costs of new books. The lack of a routinized selection process does not guarantee each department that it will get new up-to-date materials. The lack of routine encourages individual initiative and perhaps competition between the departments; it may well reinforce the status differences that already exist.

Pressures to control text selection. Administrators in Suburban and Urban were able to talk about trends toward centralizing and controlling decisions about curriculum and texts. In both systems, the focus has been on setting educational goals that are appropriate for the times: these emphasize basic education. Both districts are approaching the problem in much the same way. They are working to develop educational goals and then will seek materials with which to achieve them. Goal setting, rather than the selection of the materials, is the current focus of activity.

> Up to this point--up to this year--we could order any material we wanted. Now there's an attempt to centralize with the new central administration. But on a day-to-day basis, we use anything. There's no problem with materials. We have books, pamphlets--anything. (Urban/Social Studies)

The new supervisor for curriculum at the central office commented:

> Text selection was a hodgepodge done by a clerk who sat down near the librarian. I didn't even know she belonged to me for the better part of a year. She was called the clerk for instruction. She stayed in contact with publishers and had them bring in their materials. But I don't really know what she did. I guess she got books. Now I have a text review commission to review the whole process. I need to know what's in the books. Right now, nobody knows what's in the books besides the publishers. We don't want to be run by the publishers. For a long time they determined the curriculum by the content of their books. Now we're getting control. The same is true for externally funded programs. We're going to decide what our curriculum is and then find the programs and the books that meet those needs. You might say that we've been a very emaciated dog wagged by a very heavy tail. (Urban/Central Administrator)

This review commission has not begun to function, however, because the direction in which the system is moving (the goals) has not yet been defined. Those with a jaded view derived from long service in the district suggest that decisions made at central office will have minimal impact on the schools in any case, due to the schools' traditional autonomy.

It is interesting to reflect on the relationship between the central administration's direction in textbook control and the limited course options available in Urban. We described the ways in which English teachers have reorganized and tightly coordinated the English department so that an entire spectrum of electives were eliminated, leaving students with virtually no choices. At the time, we noted that the initiative for these changes came from the teachers' perceptions of what would be appropriate for the students, and we suggested that these perceptions were shaped in part by the current rational focus on basic skills. Now we see that the central administration is also responding to those issues. What is important from the point of view of understanding organizational control and coordination is to remember that these changes began at the level of the teachers in an individual high school and not at the central

office. Should the central office succeed in its attempts to restructure the entire curriculum in the district, it might appear at a later time that the impetus for change came from the top of the bureaucratic authority hierarchy. Although this may be accurate for some schools in the district, it would be a grossly inadequate description of the source of these changes in Urban. Both sets of changes, however, are responses to judgments made in light of changing ideas about what schools ought to teach.

Overview

Teachers agree that material and text selection is not a bureaucratic procedure in terms of decision-making authority. Teachers select their own materials with little if any involvement from the administration. In Suburban, requests for new books are negotiated one-on-one between the individual teacher and the principal. The department chairperson might play an intermediary role between them, but this role involves respresenting the teacher, not making decisions. In Urban, there is a tendency for decisions to be made within the departments by teachers as a group. As in Suburban, the chairperson represents the teachers' requests to the principal. The principal then has the authority to make final decisions.

Teachers in these two schools did not have much to say about selecting their books. It was an issue that inspired little interest or emotion. Perhaps this is an indication that the process is satisfactory. On the other hand, the absence of a formalized procedure may make it more difficult for teachers to describe a rather informal process.

Summary

When we investigated the selection of textbooks, we were particularly interested in two interrelated questions. Do teachers retain autonomy over their work by having a significant opportunity to select the materials with which they teach? Does the bureaucratic structure, the text selection procedure, fulfill its function of controlling the materials with which teachers teach?

The bureaucratic adoption procedures do limit the range of materials with which teachers teach, but the only formal reason for this limitation seems to be the fear of creating controversy by teaching sensitive topics. We have seen that teachers are attuned to this potential even without a formal structure to remind them. Beyond this, state adoption creates no problems for teachers. They do not, individually, have any difficulty selecting from among a sample of five rather than fifty texts. They do not, for example, want to peruse the entire domain of American history texts; it is too large and the criteria for selection are too vague. Limiting the field makes sense to them.[6] The problem and constraint that teachers feel directly as individuals results from having to choose only one text.

Teachers feel that students need different kinds of books, and that selecting one Social Studies or Spanish book for all students in a large district overlooks the heterogeneity in the student body. Thus, the administrative requirement to choose one book limits the teachers' ability to teach in a way that will meet the needs of a variety of students. In

---

[6] It is interesting in this regard to consider what teachers in Urban and Suburban say about selecting books. They do not study all possible texts either; they limit the field by looking over what happens to be in the school. This range would include old books, samples, or advertisements for new materials. They also rely on colleagues.

addition, teachers have their own opinions about how a subject ought to be taught. Some, for example, prefer to approach the teaching of a foreign language by stressing oral/aural learning; others prefer to begin with the formal grammar. One textbook does not do both. The process of selecting one book highlights teachers' personal preferences and then minimizes or discounts them as the majority vote results in a choice.

In the districts that have formal adoption procedures, teachers voiced more complaints about their texts than did teachers in the other two districts. This may well indicate that the selection process limits their ability to work with material that they prefer. It may also indicate that teachers who are responsible for selecting their own materials are less likely to complain about them. But there is yet another interesting possibility. The formal text selection process may be a forum that inadvertently brings out the disagreements and ambiguities inherent in educational decisions. The district-wide committees are a structure in which teachers can formally voice their disagreements. It encourages them to do so in their own personal interest. Perhaps the formal process then, while it results in what looks like consensus in the form of selection of one text, in addition highlights the lack of consensus among the teachers themselves.

It may be fruitful to consider the formal textbook adoption procedure as a structure that has multiple purposes, only one of which is to control the materials available to teachers. The formal adoption system can suggest to the community that the schools are monitoring the content of books, in order to acknowledge the particular concerns of parents and taxpayers. The system can also be seen as a protective device that eliminates material that will stir controversy and protects schools from em-

barrassing attacks and adverse publicity. By selecting one text for an entire system, schools can give the impression that teachers agree on the method and content of particular subjects (internal disagreements are rarely made public). This adds a sense of certainty to the ambiguous process of schooling. When teachers teach the same subject with different books, the community may wonder if they know what they are doing. In all of these ways, the formal adoption process can add credibility to the work of schools. To the extent that the bureaucratic structure accomplishes these tasks, we suggest that it is fulfilling a multiplicity of purposes.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans are the written evidence that teachers have spent time thinking about and planning their instructional activities. When they are for the teachers' own benefit, teachers say that they write them as needed, and rely on them as guides. When they are collected and checked by a school administrator, they have a different function that is only obliquely related to the control and coordination of teaching. They seem to be an indication of potential rather than actual control, and they seem to be important for maintaining the image of the school to other school people. Collecting lesson plans can confirm that principals are concerned with the quality of instruction in their schools. They are also meant to be evidence to a substitute that a school is well-organized. The principals in these five schools have different requirements for teachers regarding lesson plans. Some of the differences can be accounted for by the differences in the emphasis on formal structure in each of the schools; others can be accounted for as a function of principal

leadership style and philosophy. Further, the ways in which each of the schools handles lesson plans is similar to the ways in which they handle text selection (with the possible exception of Suburban). Therefore we discuss lesson plans as a distinct control and also as another view into the ways in which different schools respond to bureaucratic controls.

We concluded that Central seemed most serious about requiring its teachers to use the texts adopted in the formal committees. This school is also most serious about collecting lesson plans. Lesson plans are submitted to the vice principal responsible for curriculum.

> He goes over them to see if they are clear. They're really for the substitute in case the teacher is absent. Last year I wrote them in English. This year I can write them in Spanish. (Central/Foreign Language)

Another teacher noted:

> The lesson plans don't have to be very detailed. I do mine about a quarter in advance for every day, and I do it as a bureaucratic procedure. But I have my own lesson plans from which I work, and they are much more detailed . . . . I leave the formal lesson plan on my desk, but I carry the detailed plan around with me--I wouldn't want it to get lost. The purpose of the plan is to provide some guidance for a substitute, but I don't think a substitute could use my personal lesson plan. It's full of alternative approaches and suggestions for things I might try, and what I do depends on how the class is going. (Central/Social Studies)

The English department chair said that he himself neither collects plans nor reads them over, but that he reminds teachers to submit them to the dean. He said:

> I remind teachers to submit them; the dean reads them over and makes suggestions . . . . They're [lesson plans] primarily to help the substitute follow them. The purposes also are to organize teaching and for the substitute. (Central/English)

The lesson plans, then, are not used to monitor the teachers' actual work. They are checked for clarity more than content, and administrators

do not visit classrooms in order to determine whether teachers are carrying out the lessons that are in the plan books. It seems rather that the plans serve to assure the administration that the teachers are thinking about their work and are making some effort to formalize that thinking in written form.

Teachers and administrators in Central remarked that the plans are written for the benefit of the substitute more than for the classroom teacher. This is odd. First, the regular teacher is present, not absent, most of the time, suggesting that the elaborate procedure of writing, collecting, and checking plans is implemented for use on few occasions. Second, teachers all agree that plans are of little real value to a substitute. They say that it is not really possible for a substitute to walk in, pick up the teacher's plan book, and teach the lesson as the teacher has it written. Therefore, it seems that the lesson plans as used in Central neither control or coordinate teachers' instructional work, nor do they provide much help to the substitute.

In City, teachers do not submit lesson plans. Instead, as described in the textbook section, they send all administrators and parents a statement about the materials they will require students to read, the topics they will cover, the requirements for the course, and the grading procedures.

> We make a statement of what will be covered and send it to the parents, the students, and the administrators. The superintendent believes that parents need to know what they're buying. Also, it's a protective device. (City/English)

The statements, then, are a way for the school to publicly document the content of its courses, to inform parents, and give them the opportunity to request changes in the materials. Teachers and administrators say

this protects them: if parents come in and complain about material in the middle of a term, teachers and administrators can point to the disclosure form and remind them that the school is open and responsive. Going public protects the school from parental complaints by giving them a voice in decisions about their children's schooling.

City, Central, and Village approach lesson plans in much the same way that they approach textbooks. In Central, the administration has a fairly tight control on textbooks and it regularly collects formal lesson plans. This is not to say that there is close monitoring of what teachers actually do in their classrooms, something that we cannot know from this study, but that there is an attempt to fully implement a bureaucratic control system.

At City, the concern with text selection seemed to reflect a concern for controversial issues that would violate the norms of segments of the community and result in public outcry. The disclosure statements seem to address the same concern. The school wants to maintain its faith with the community by being open and informing it of curriculum content. The administration believes that this approach will in fact permit the teacher greater flexibility than if the public were uninformed and worried.

In Village, teachers have considerable flexibility to select their texts within the adoption system. There is little immediate concern with controversial issues that might offend the larger community; lesson plans are not required. The principal is concerned with protecting his teachers' right to teach their own way.

These three schools, then, seem consistent in the ways in which they use the formal procedures that they have. There are some public concerns in Central and City, and the formal procedures seem to address those con-

cerns. In Village, there is no doubt concern with public image; however, this is not obviously reflected in the bureaucratic control and coordination mechanisms in the school.

Neither Suburban nor Urban required teachers to submit lesson plans. In Suburban, plans were supposed to be in the teacher's desk if the principal or vice principal should ask to see them; in practice, they were rarely requested. Teachers commented that they felt that they were required to have lesson plans for the image of the school--"It looks good if you have it." Plans were supposed to be useful to a substitute, but as in Central, teachers doubted that the plans really helped. However, in Suburban, substitutes were asked to fill out reports noting whether the lesson plans were present in the desk. If the plans were not present, then the assistant principal would notify the teacher of this omission. Teachers who commented on this procedure found it demeaning and suggested that it confirmed their belief that plans were written for image rather than for substance. On virtually no other occasion were lesson plans checked, and no one in the school had the responsibility of determining whether the plans were related to actual instruction.

Teachers in Urban were also expected to have plans, but they were not asked to submit them. One teacher commented humorously:

> We don't have to do lesson plans, but last year (the principal) came around and checked them and we didn't know what the hell was going on! (Urban/English)

A Foreign Language teacher said:

> Lesson plans--no one has ever asked for them. At the beginning I used to make them, but my supervisor didn't want to see them so I stopped. (Urban/Foreign Language)

The only time that plans are formally (if sketchily) examined is in the alternate year when tenured teachers are rated. Again, this is once in

two years and is seen as a formality, rather than a meaningful attempt at control.

Overview: lesson plans. Lesson plans have scant relation to bureaucratic coordination and control of teachers' work. In Urban and Suburban, lesson plans seem to be a formality without substance: collecting them once every two years or checking them only when a teacher is absent does not suggest that they are devices either for monitoring or controlling teachers' work. Even in Central, where they are collected and checked periodically, teachers say that the plans are "something to do"--a requirement--rather than a control. In City, it is not the disclosure statements themselves, but the community's values and interests that shape teachers' choices. The disclosure statements are public indications of the school's responsiveness to the community's concerns, and interestingly, they are designed to free rather than constrain the teachers.

CURRICULUM GUIDES

Curriculum guides are less of a presence than lesson plans. When teachers are asked about them, they tend to think of written materials that originate in the district's central office. Within this frame of reference, teachers and administrators were quite consistent in saying that guides were suggestions rather than directions for their teaching.

> [It's] just a guide. I teach American History the way it should be taught and generally, you're left alone to do what you want. (City/Social Studies)

> Curriculum guides are there, but they're guides; you're not locked into it. You can do it how you want. Teachers develop their own tests and their own methods of evaluating the students. (Suburban/Social Studies)

> We have teacher guides, but they are only that--guides. (Central/Principal)

> We don't follow guides. All of us are experienced teachers and as far as what we do in the classroom, we're left alone. How we do it is up to us. (Urban/Social Studies)
>
> There are guides that give us an overview. There's nothing that we have to follow. (Village/Social Studies)

There were one or two teachers who indicated that they did use curriculum guides. However, they said that they chose to do so on their own. In Suburban, which does not have many guides, there were some teachers who found the absence, rather than thepresence, of guides troublesome.

> No one knows what I teach. Oh, I do put out a syllabus for my own students, but it's vague. (Suburban/English)
>
> There was no curriculum guide, nothing. I had a room and books and nothing to go on. I used my own personal resources. I took some professional days to visit other high schools. I went to the state department to get curriculum guides, but it's all so different. (Suburban/Foreign Language)
>
> There are no curriculum guides, nothing at all. You have no idea of what they want you to teach or what they want you to achieve in this course. There's nothing on how to do it. There was a general description of what to do with the ninth grade, but I chose to do with them what I wanted. For a low class it's okay, but for my other kids, I've been feeling my way around and I'm not sure how good it is. It's sink or swim here. (Suburban/English)

These comments suggest that too little structure can create anxiety for some teachers. Rather than providing the opportunity to create a course, complete lack of guidelines gives the teacher no assurance that he or she is proceeding in an appropriate direction. When we couple the absence of guides with the freedom to select their own materials, some teachers seem to be left with nothing on which to hang their hats. While this situation does not occur in most of the schools, for some teachers in Suburban it is a source of discomfort and anxiety.

Although teachers and administrators claim little reliance on district guides, when we looked at actual curriculum coordination in the

schools, we found that teachers' work was often more coordinated than their comments about guides led us to expect. It appears that teachers themselves have reasons to coordinate their work that develops out of specific events in their own schools. Therefore, we are presenting data related to curriculum guides using a broad definition of the term "guide." We are not restricting our discussion to those guides developed for the district, but are looking at the actual coordination that occurs within the schools. Our data suggest that teachers often coordinate their work in ways that are more structured than those suggested by the guides. Teachers see these efforts to coordinate as responsive to events occurring within their own schools as well as within the larger culture. They evaluate their efforts in terms of their specific needs. Therefore, we present a sample of events that teachers and administrators mentioned as influencing their instructional coordination.

Student course changes. In Central, a substantial portion of the students have jobs. From time to time during the school year, their working hours change and this requires them to change their course schedules. The school does not object to these changes, but they do cause instructional problems. As one teacher asked, "What do you do with a student who transfers into your class and has just completed the book you are about to begin?" The response in this school has been to more tightly coordinate the different sections of English. Teachers have agreed, for example, to teach the novel first semester and the short story second semester. Then if a student switches classes at the mid-term, he or she will not end up with two semesters of novel and none of short story.

One of the English teachers talked about the process of this coordination. He noted that the English teachers get together at the beginning

of the school year to coordinate the year's instruction in a particular course. The aim of these meetings is to agree to the material that will be covered in each quarter. Within the quarter, the teachers are free to teach in whatever order they choose. Teachers then meet frequently to discuss their progress through the course material. Although teachers can teach the semester's content in any order, at the time of the interview all of the teachers were teaching Julius Caesar. When asked why the curriculum was so tightly coordinated, the teacher replied:

> It's important to students when they switch between quarters. Also, if they fail and have to make it up, they have to make up the same work. (Central/English)

There are significant numbers of students in this school who do fail sections of English. By having tight coordination of the curriculum, these students are able to easily pick up the failed course the following year by repeating the term that they failed. It is possible to think of other ways of accomplishing this objective, but this is the one that has been adopted in Central. Teachers claim this coordination as their own.

> I wouldn't say that the teachers have to follow the curriculum guide, since no one will come around to check up on you. But since the English department has coordinated its curriculum and tried to standardize what's covered in the classes, we need to follow it fairly closely and so we do. (Central/English)

> There's a tighter rein [in English] because there are so many sections and kids keep switching. (Central/English)

These teachers do not see the district as dictating their coordination. They feel that they are responding to their own needs in their own school. The impetus for coordinating, however, did not come from any educational decisions dictated by the nature of the material, nor did it come from the teachers' desire to teach in a coordinated way. It came from the influence of student job schedules on course changes in the high

school.

Tests. In City, the current principal feels strongly that his high school should have an excellent honors program that permits able students to take the Advanced Placement Exam at the end of their senior year. Such a program is important first because it meets the educational needs of a group of students, and second because it helps attract students to City who might otherwise be in private schools. With the principal's support, the teacher responsible for the advanced-placement English class pressed for a coordinated curriculum that would increase the students' chances of scoring well on the exam. The guidance counselor responsible for the honors program, along with the teachers involved, worked to coordinate their courses with the exam in mind. This coordination was accomplished formally during a summer workshop:

> There is a four-year correlation of materials, so each teacher knows what to expect up to the 12th grade AP class. That teacher dictates what the curriculum will be. (City/English)

> The advanced-placement teacher has us cover a 140 word vocabulary list. The freshman list is repeated again in the sophomore year, and another 140 word list is added to that. The same thing happens in junior year and senior year. She [AP teacher] wants us to concentrate on reading and writing, and she wants to be sure the kids read some books of substance . . . . (The guidance counselor] was instrumental in setting it up, and he wants very high standards for the courses. Occasionally we meet with him at his request. Actually, there was a workshop three years ago when we worked out this correlation. (City/English)

Curriculum coordination did not come from the central office or from the presence of a guide. It developed in the school in response to a teacher's need to prepare students for a particular examination. In effect, the exam is an external pressure that resulted in a curriculum coordination project.

The presence of just any test, however, is not sufficient to insure coordination. In the same system, there is a set of competency tests that students must pass in order to graduate from high school. The tests are new, and during the first two years of their administration, many students at the eighth grade level failed. As a result, City now offers a mandatory remedial English class for all those who have failed the exam. Students must remain in that class until they succeed in passing the exam. However, the presence of this exam has not yet resulted in teachers' coordinating their work with the exam in mind; most teachers say that they see no point in coordinating their efforts.

> It's quite simple. [The class] is preparation for a test. I do it however I see it best. I basically work for the test. There are different forms of the test, but 40% of the material is very similar. (City/English)

> Teachers think that this deteriorates performance levels. as you teach to the test. (City/English)

It would appear that the two exams are valued differently by the teachers and perhaps by the community. Teachers see benefits in teaching students the materials they will need in order to do well on an Advanced Placement Exam, and yet they feel it is harmful to teach to a competency test. Our interpretation of this difference in perspective must be speculative. It is possible that high school teachers do not see themselves as responsible for getting students past an eighth grade examination. They may, however, take great pride in a group of students who score well on the Advanced Placement Exam. Given this interpretation, teachers would have little personal incentive to teach students to pass the competency test. It may also be that the timing of this research was too soon after the implementation of the competency test to detect a response from the teachers. Perhaps after another year or two, teachers

will have responded to public concern about student failure with a more integrated curriculum. At the moment, it is only possible to note the differences in response to the two exams.

The norm of working together. In Village, teachers stress their individuality, their professionalism, and their control over their work. But this emphasis does not preclude their working together to coordinate instruction within and across departments. During the year of this study, teachers in the English department found that Social Studies teachers taught their students a different method of making note cards than did the English teachers. Apparently this was confusing to the students, time consuming to the Social Studies teachers who expected the students to know their method, and at odds with the English teachers' feelings about how the process should be handled. The English teachers voiced their concern informally to the Social Studies teachers with the result that next year the English teachers will teach the note card method they prefer, prior to the students having to write term papers for Social Studies.

> They all got together and met and worked out an agreement. They decided that all of them would use notecards. In addition, the English teachers are going to spend about two weeks teaching the kids how to write reports. They aren't going to ask the kids to write term papers, but they're going to teach them how to do term papers just before the time that the Social Studies teachers require them. (Village/English)

Teachers commented that this kind of interaction and coordination often occurred in the high school and that it was possible due to the small size of the school. School size, however, is clearly not enough. Suburban is essentially the same size as Village and yet this kind of interaction and coordination does not seem to occur there.

At Village, there was general agreement that a variety of teachers and counselors should press for what they would like to see included in the curriculum. For example, the guidance counselor commented that:

> Curriculum is my interest and I sit in on those committees that have to do with curriculum. I have to make the master schedule work, so I need to know what the courses are. I wanted the three levels for English and I went to the meeting and pushed for it. (Village/Guidance Counselor)

And the chairperson of the Social Studies department, who herself was not a Social Studies teacher, talked about her involvement with a State History course:

> I feel strongly about it cutting into (State) History. People should know about the place they live in. Pre-enrollment forms show that enrollment in (State) History is way down. We need 12 students to offer the course and we don't have it. What am I going to do about this? I want to get the Government teacher to include local and state government in his course. That way we could include (the state). Right now he tends to focus on the national level, but I would like him to include something about local. (Village/Social Studies)

Thus in Village, there are various sources of legitimate input into the curriculum. The presence of a curriculum guide is not necessary to insure that teachers pursue curriculum issues seriously. The sense of common purpose that exists in Village is reflected in the informal involvement of many staff members in curriculum issues, and insures that curriculum is a constant focus of discussion.

Overview

Curriculum guides, where they exist, provide broad outlines for teachers; they do not structure or control daily work in a direct and obvious fashion. They are less of a presence than either textbook selection processes or lesson plans. But the peripheral influence of

curriculum guides should not lead to the conclusion that curriculum is uncoordinated. There are many factors that lead teachers to coordinate curriculum content. We have noted the presence of an exam, the students' ability to change classes, and teachers' preference for their method of making note cards--all were sufficient impetus for curriculum coordination efforts. When we add to this list the presence of textbooks, the effect of goal setting in schools like City, and the emphasis on basic skills in all the schools, it seems obvious that these mechanisms are more powerful than the formal curriculum guide.

Finally, it is often assumed that teachers want to be left alone to teach independently. The teachers in this sample would agree with this conclusion. But they also seem to welcome the opportunity to work with other teachers on curriculum issues that they define as essential. We cite these examples of teacher supported curriculum coordination (and refer the reader to those discussed in the section on course options) as evidence of teacher initiated and supported coordination of teachers' work.

RULES, MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

The previous sections of this chapter have focussed on control and coordination of classroom instruction. Textbook adoption procedures, lesson plans, and curriculum guides are all formal attempts to control work within classrooms. What is more, they tend to focus administrative authority on the teacher as an individual rather than as a member of the school community. Rules, meetings and procedures that are less directly related to instruction focus our attention on teachers as a group and on whole school activity. We have looked at formal rules for teacher be-

> We are treated as professional people. As long as I do my work, nobody cares when I leave at the end of the day. They want us here 15 minutes before school. That's about it. We are not required to go to any school-associated activities, such as assemblies or football games, but we're encouraged to go and most of us do go. (City/English)

Although most of the teachers in these schools would agree that they are treated as professionals, they share a pervasive belief that they are expected to do much more than the lack of rules suggests. The expectations concern participation outside of the classroom, and the pressure to participate in some of the schools leaves teachers feeling that they have little personal life. New teachers feel this pressure intensely, but senior teachers also complain about expectations.

> New teachers always get a lot of extra work. They have to learn what's expected. You always say yes when they tell you that you should do something extra, because you think everybody else is doing it. But it's your naivete. (Village/English)

> The only rule I dislike is that it's frowned upon if you don't take an extra-curricular activity. That's not really a rule, it's peer pressure. We have lunch duty and hall duty and all sorts of things, but we have to offer football and soccer to be a high school. It's a societal thing . . . . I was told--you know, told/asked--to do it (cheerleading). I have no use for sports. (Village/English)

> The number of hours I put in is crazy. I work three to four hours a day at night. A lot is expected of teachers in this school, and I don't know how people do it. They (administrators) might come up to you and say, 'I see you didn't get involved in anything this year.' That's a subtle pressure to do something. Or they suggest that you appear at some evening meetings. (Suburban/English)

These expectations, rather than the presence of formal rules, constrain

---

They noted that they must have formal permission to leave the building, that they must sign in and out of the building, that they must be in their rooms prior to the students' arrival, and that their attendance is marked at meetings. This pattern is consistent with other aspects of control in Central. There is an emphasis on the overt signs of bureaucratic control.

havior and the use of meetings and have found that neither one has a large controlling or coordinating impact on teachers. At most, they remind teachers how to accomplish time-dependent events such as the distribution of report cards or the scheduling of classes. However, when we turn our attention to the procedures surrounding enforcement of attendance rules for students, we find mechanisms that do directly affect teachers as a group. There are strict rules and procedures designed to help each of the five schools keep track of and control students. In each school these rules are the focus of much energy and emotion. Therefore we devote most of our discussion to these student oriented rules and procedures.

Rules for Teachers

There are few formal school rules that attempt to control or prescribe teachers' behavior. The faculty handbooks in the five schools do talk about attendance requirements for teachers--arrival and departure hours as well as the procedures to follow in order to leave the building early--but the overwhelming content of the faculty handbooks concerns procedures for controlling students. Faculty handbooks reproduce many of the student rules along with the procedures that teachers are to follow in order to enforce those rules. For example, the procedures for referrals due to class cutting are spelled out as are the rules for chaperoning at school dances, the policies on academic requirements for participation in varsity athletics, and the paths of hall patrol.

Teachers do not talk about rules governing their own work in schools; rules imply a non-professional role that most reject.[7]

[7]Teachers in Central did report some emphasis on rules for their behavior. (con't.)

teachers' choices and make them feel out of control of their own lives. The existence of informal expectations seems to have a more powerful impact on teachers than do the rules. And it points out the strength of personal pressure in a school. It is not the rules but the personal relationships and school norms that shape certain aspects of teachers' work.

There was one example in which teachers claimed that a formal rule interfered with their right to use their own judgment; this concerned the control of criteria for passing a student. One of the Social Studies teachers in Village talked about the grading system and the way recent changes responded to parental pressure and ignored the teachers' perspective.

> The grading system is district wide. If a student gets a C or a D at third quarter and an F at fourth quarter, the district says I have to pass the student. So that a student can slide for all the rest of the semester and I have to pass him . . . . The Board doesn't like the political pressure involved in failing a kid, and the parents react to problems by calling a school board member. They don't come here to us at the school. The school board gets afraid to take a stand. (Village/Social Studies)

This policy interferes with the teachers' authority to decide whether a student will pass, and by doing so, removes one of the only sanctions that teachers have at their disposal: fear of failure. Teachers see this rule as a direct blow to their authority.

The situation is complicated, however. In the district there are also attendance rules tied to passing a course. A given number of unexcused absences results in an automatic failure regardless of the quality of work that the student was doing. Again this limits the authority of the teacher to determine criteria for passing. But teachers are more ambivalent about this rule. They like their authority, granted by the administration, to fail a student for poor attendance. They consider

this rule to be administrative support for their authority. Yet at the same time, teachers do not want to be without any choice in individual cases. They want the option to use their own discretion with individual students, and they want administrative support when they decide in favor of failing a student.

In general, teachers then do not talk about rules governing their behavior. Much of what they do might be defined at some point in formal rules, but teachers themselves support these rules and procedures that form the basis for the school's operation. Expectations, however, loom large in teachers' eyes and lead them to feel both collegial and administrative pressure to participate in a variety of non-classroom activities. They do not welcome these pressures; we will find out why in the next section.

Meetings

Although one sometimes has the impression that teachers are being overwhelmed by meetings as a part of the growing proceduralism of schools, the teachers in this sample do not report such a concern. At most they are required to be at faculty meetings once a month; more often the entire faculty meets only several times a year. Those meetings tend to be informational. Department chairpeople do meet with the principal more often (once a week in Urban, monthly in other schools) and then report back to their teachers informally. There is a hierarchical flow of information. Department faculty meetings are also infrequent, although teachers report that they meet when necessary to discuss their own curriculum and student issues. In no case was a faculty meeting a decision-making body concerning school policy. Although faculty may vote on proposals put forth by

teacher committees or the administration, the administration retains the authority to make decisions.

There are faculty senates in four of the schools, but these too lack decision-making authority and serve instead as forums in which faculty members can air their opinions and make recommendations. These senates, as well as the committees that are formed to deal with specific school-wide issues, are the focus of much teacher cynicism and despair. Teachers uniformly find them stressful and a waste of time. They complain that they spend countless hours wrestling with issues only to find that the administration does not take their recommendations seriously. Teachers also admit to having little experience working in groups and suggest that they do not make the best use of the opportunities that they do have. Even in those districts in which there is a formal commitment to increase the participation and influence of teachers, teachers find that they lack the ability to use the formal mechanisms that exist. Suburban and City are both in districts with a current emphasis on increasing teacher participation. We will describe the tensions and conflicts that arise in these two schools as a result of formal attempts to modify teachers' role in participation and decision making.

In Suburban the administration is formally committed to increasing teacher participation in decision making. This emphasis is part of the new administrative team's effort to modernize and improve the schools in the district. However, teachers do not feel that the administration takes their views seriously: they believe that the administration is more concerned with the image than the substance of participation. As we mentioned in the description of the schools, Suburban is a school in which a group of students have wrested authority from the administration. They

vandalize parts of the building, control the outdoor smoking area and create disturbances for teachers by playing games and radios there during class periods. The teachers have been asked to develop plans for improving and correcting this situation. Needless to say, this is a difficult task. After much discussion and disagreement, teachers have suggested that eliminating or modifying the current open study hall system would improve the situation by requiring that all students be in classrooms during the day; they would no longer be allowed to hang around the cafeteria and smoking lounge. Amidst a strong teacher consensus, the administration has decided that this is not a viable option. They have not developed an alternative plan of their own and so the situation remains unchanged.

> Faculty has wanted it (open study) closed.. But our feelings are overlooked by the administration. They are probably under pressure, but we don't know what it is. But we're not heard, or at least we're not listened to. The smoking lounge is used for things other than it was intended--vandalism, firecrackers. It's an area where the students can't be touched. (Suburban/English)

Teachers are frustrated continually by the sense that they are being asked to participate in a charade. They work hard, develop alternative options, and find that the administration acts as it chooses without regard to the teacher input. In Suburban, administrative action has taken the form of inaction with regard to a variety of troublesome issues.

The lack of teacher influence in Suburban seems to be aggravated by the existence of many formal structures for participation. Teachers complain that they have no voice through any of their committees, their senate, or their faculty meetings.

> There's a faculty meeting once a month. The principal sets the agenda and it's usually announcements. It's meaningless. We (the teachers) have items that we want but we never get to them. (Suburban/English)

> We're supposed to hash out problems (in the faculty senate). It's not new. It's been around a while. We're supposed to discuss things there and then go back and discuss them in our departments. It's kind of informational, just dates and things, but it's not supposed to be like that. It's mostly busy work. It meets once a month and we can bring up any issue we want. Then the things that come out of the faculty senate get discussed at the faculty meetings. Yesterday we met and discussed the weighted grades. Last year I was on the attendance committee. We spent hours and hours working on this and the administration shot it down. They said you couldn't fail a kid for lack of attendance. There's a feeling that the administration has something in mind and set up a committee to make it look like there's participation. Then they do what they wanted to do from the beginning. I don't know if that's right, but a lot of people feel that way. (Suburban/Foreign Language)

> The administration was trying to use it (the faculty senate) as another time to make announcements. Now we have a different teacher chair the meeting each month and we set the agenda for the next meeting. There's a potential for decision making here, but it hasn't happened yet. (Suburban/English)

In spite of the administration's formal commitment to teacher participation and influence, teachers find little opportunity to influence school policy. Some teachers, as indicated in the last comment above, still believe that there is a potential for teacher influence, but they recognize that it is a potential. Further, the implications are that influence will not be granted by the administration; it will be won by the teachers if they can assert themselves as a group.

Comments from administrators reveal that they are in fact ambivalent about teacher participation in policy and decision making. Their ambivalence lends credence to the teachers' claims that the formal committees and meetings are there to create an image rather than a substance. The superintendent of schools spoke directly about his position on participation, for students as well as teachers.

We're also concerned with the role of students themselves

> within the governance of school. I'd like to see more of it (participation). But we need to develop sophistication. It's the same for the staff, and I share this only with you. Philosophically, I believe in participation in management. But at the same time, there's an expectation for accountability. We need effective participants, and I am unwilling to share participation if I'll get mediocrity. (Suburban/Superintendent)

Although one can sympathize with the superintendent's sentiments, one gets the sense of an administrator who has a clear idea of where he might stand on an issue and who is looking for support from the faculty. One wonders whether disagreement is evidence of mediocrity. Collegial participation might imply that the superintendent would compromise on some of his positions; it would imply an interaction between the faculty and the administration. The same would be true at the school building level. This interaction seems not to be what the administration has in mind; at the same time that the system stresses a change in authority relationships, it is developing a hierarchical chain of communication for the school system.

> I want to develop a line of command to communicate properly in the school. We're developing a managerial training approach. I ran a training program in the Spring for anyone who had people under them. That's the beginning of trying to get the department people to do the same thing with people under them. It's one of my goals and I reached it. (Suburban/Principal)

Although it is not impossible, it is difficult to imagine the simultaneous implementation of teacher participation and a formal hierarchical chain of communication. Ambiguity and ambivalence seem rampant in the system. Comments from the assistant principal add to the reality of that tension.

> The faculty senate was devised with the idea that departments could bring back issues and discuss them in small groups rather than with the whole faculty meeting. We

> use the faculty meetings now for in-service training . . . . The faculty senate is really a review place prior to implementing something new. And the faculty meetings are still in-service . . . . Everything is in the organizational stage. The faculty senate has no decision-making power. It reviews and recommends . . . . I put in the attendance rules, including detention. I can do what I want as an administrator, but that's not the wise thing to do, so it came out of a faculty committee. (Suburban/Assistant Principal)

The situation in Suburban is not unique; tensions in the authority relationships between administrators and teachers are legendary and the solution is not clear. What is clear is that a series of mixed messages from the administration to the teachers can have profound negative consequences for staff morale and for future administrator/teacher interactions. Teachers are aware of the administration's real position on staff participation. The presence of the formal structures has not blinded them to their use in practice. One might say that the administration has control of teacher participation at the present time, and in spite of its claim, is not really sure that it would like to change that arrangement.

In City, the situation is slightly different. Teachers firmly believe that the central administration and the principal are committed to increasing teacher influence and participation. Although there have not been grand changes, teachers do not feel that they are involved in a sham. Instead they experience frustration with their inability to take advantage of the opportunities that are available: some suggest that teachers might prefer it if the principal made the decisions himself.

> I'm the representative (to the senate) from my department. It's unfair, you know--one representative. It's not proportional. ROTC gets one representative and we get one representative. This year it has been very ineffective. Its effectiveness depends on the person elected chairman. In fact, I made a motion to disband it. The chairman has a ten-

> dency to go along with the principal, but this isn't shared governance. (City/Social Studies)
>
> It's (the council) only as effective as the chairman. If he's afraid of his job or of the principal, then the council amounts to nothing more than a sounding board. I'm really impressed with the doctrine of shared governance, and I admire the superintendent for giving us this. But here and now, we're a little ineffective . . . . The principal is easy to work with, if you work with him, but some people want him to make all the decisions. (City/Guidance)

The problem here is not administrative resistance, but the inability of the teachers to use the structures effectively. One gets the sense that there is a real opportunity for influence, and teachers can give examples of the ways in which they have already used the council to solve some of their own problems. They describe, for example, the way in which the council has been involved in shifting authority for teacher assignment from the assistant principal to the department chairpeople. And they point out that recent changes in hall patrol resulted from a weekend retreat in which faculty hashed out a plan of their own. Further, the administration does not divide the faculty into committees for specific issues; the council is the faculty structure designed for participation and all issues come to it. This focus provides the council with the opportunity to centralize and solidify teacher influence. Teachers talk about the possibility of increasing their influence with the support of the administration. They suggest that at the present time, they do not know how to effectively use the opportunities that they have.

We describe the problem of participation in formal meetings in these two schools because they highlight the reality of the formal authority hierarchy system in the schools and point out the difficulty of attempting to change the relationships that such a hierarchy creates. For those in administrative positions, changes can signify loss of control;

for those who are teachers, changes mean more authority, responsibility, and frustration as well as more control over their work setting. There is ambivalence and uncertainty when the traditional authority relationships are questioned.

When we consider participation in meetings, we focus on school-wide issues. Although teachers may influence their instructional work in classrooms, they seem to have less of an influence on school-wide issues. These issues require joint action; classroom issues require individual decision making. Teachers are untrained and unfamiliar with group decision making across departments. This lack of training combined with the reality of hierarchical administrative authority and responsibility join to limit the teachers' involvement and control.

Enforcing Attendance Rules for Students

Teachers, counselors and administrators are enmeshed in a tangle of rules and procedures designed to keep students in school and in class. Truancy, lateness, and class-cutting in these five schools are greater problems than fighting or drug and alcohol abuse or vandalism. In Urban and Central truancy is an enormous problem, but one that remains hidden in teachers' daily work. Lateness and class-cutting, on the other hand, are constant reminders to teachers and administrators that some students come to school for reasons that have little to do with formal education. They are in school in order to be with their friends, and their presence is a constant jab at the authority of the school. Both truancy and class-cutting emphasize the reality of compulsion and subvert the myth that all

students voluntarily come to school to learn.[8]

Although these five schools have markedly different absolute problems with lateness and class-cutting, the issues for teachers are the same. They want the students in class, and they want the administration of the school to insure that attendance. The administration, however, does not have the ability to meet this demand alone. Therefore, teachers must get involved in patrolling the halls and stairwells in an effort to move students into classrooms, Each of the schools has a plan that involves teachers in hall duty and requires them to report all student absences for each of the periods of the school day. In talking to teachers one gets the impression that they are involved in a very tense game of hide and seek with some of the students. Those students who play the game speak of it more lightheartedly.

> Cutting out? It looks hard but it's real easy to get out of this school. You just walk out with a group that's going to the satellite (building). Then, when they go into the building, you cut around the side and run and jump over the fence and you're out. I once did it and skipped three periods. Kids will always find a way out. (Urban/9th grade boy)

> I'd wake up in the morning and say I wasn't feeling well, and my mom would write a note. Also, don't tell anyone about this, I used to work in the office and so I could get all the stuff I needed and forge the names for people. (Village/12th grade girl)

Students also note the lengths to which teachers will go in an effort to stop class-cutting.

> The teachers are talking about doing a 'hall sweep,' but

---

[8] We do not have information on efforts to combat truancy and so restrict this description to lateness and class-cutting. In Village these are only small problems. Students note that the size of the school mitigates against hiding out somewhere. They say that they would be found and would be embarrassed by having the whole student and faculty know in five minutes. Community pressure keeps them in line.

> it hasn't been done yet. They're going to ring a special bell, and then all the teachers will go out in the hall and pick up all the kids who are out there who are supposed to be in class. (City/11th grade girl)

Life does not sound so playful for the teachers who patrol the halls, keep careful attendance records, refer continuous offenders to counselors, and call parents with bad news about their children.

The schools stress that their concern with attendance and class-cutting stems from its direct relation to scholastic failure, which then leads students to drop out. In many instances this is a reality. But while we do not doubt at all the teachers' and administrators' interest in academic success, reducing class-cutting is important for other reasons. Students who wander the halls instead of attending classes are a constant reminder of the tenuous power relations between students and teachers. They threaten the authority of the school and its image as an institution in which students are being prepared to take their responsible place in the adult world. Class-cutting threatens each teacher's authority individually and it threatens the authority of the school as a unit. There is then, an important emotional and symbolic counterpart to the academic concerns. Schoolpeople want and need to assert their authority over the students to maintain the legitimacy of the school. But they do not find it easy, and most approaches do not satisfy either the teachers or the administrators. They tend to be elaborate procedures that fall short of their goals. In the last analysis, if students do not go to class voluntarily, they must be coerced. Schoolpeople tend to shy away from outright coercion.

Instead of exercising overt authority from the principal's office, these schools, with the exception of Urban, rely on elaborate recording

and referral procedures that identify students who are late and cut classes but fail to end that behavior. Schools have various punishments--suspension to involve the parents, detention, lowered grades, and loss of athletic privileges--but they fail to reduce the problem. Punishing the students after the fact has little influence on their behavior. The elaborate, time consuming procedures, coupled with their failure to change the situation, leave teachers and counselors frustrated. They blame each other for failing to enforce the rules and procedures adequately; they blame the parents for failing to teach their children the value of schooling.

> I check attendance and call parents about absences. I check referrals for hall infractions and note if a student has been absent three times, and then I call home. With referral forms, I send them back to the referring teacher. It's not effective though. A lot of parents don't care, or they care but they have no control. It's a parent thing. Our responsibility is to let the parents know. I try to talk to the students too and try to counsel them about attending classes. (City/English)

Teachers in City, as in other schools, complain that they spend their preparation periods keeping track of students and calling parents. Parents, they feel, have little interest and authority over their children. Thus, there is a continual, pointless effort to enforce attendance rules that is doomed to fail and continually nag at the school system.

It is clear that the schools prefer not to resort to firm and strong tactics to get the students into their classes. They do not want to assert the pressure that it would take to insure that all students were in classes and not in the halls. One senses that firm enforcement would also threaten their legitimacy. Certainly in a school as small as Suburban, one expects that teachers could work together to check the halls and enforce class attendance. Yet it isn't done and teachers wait for

the administration to solve the problem. Only in Urban has the administration taken steps to reduce the lateness and class-cutting problem. Administrative authority has had a dramatic impact in the school.

In Urban there are firm boundaries between administrative and instructional functions. Departments are strong in this school and control teacher assignments as well as curriculum decisions. The administration of the school, however, sets and enforces the policy on discipline. This, of course, includes class-cutting and lateness. At Urban, these had been enormous problems. First and second period classes were poorly attended; students were in the corridors disturbing those students who were in class. Some students didn't arrive at school until well after the second period class. In the face of this disturbing reality, the principal and assistant principal worked together to develop rules which, in the assistant principal's words, "turned the school around." The principal used his full authority to develop new lateness rules.

> The school committee says that the principal shall make rules to prevent tardies. It's loose. Everybody was failing first period when they didn't attend. I put in a more stringent rule that the district requires; it's a fifteen minute lateness rule, and it's working better. I pull in the parents after ten tardies, but that doesn't work because the parents leave early for work and they don't come in, and they're not home when their kids set off to school. (Urban/Principal)

The assistant principal added that in addition to the rules about tardiness, the school emphasizes that students must be in their classrooms during class periods: no students are permitted in the hallways. In other schools, it is difficult to enforce this rule because it depends on the cooperation of every teacher and administrative presence is scarce. Teachers and students comment that many teachers are lax about enforcing the rules. In Urban, the administration tolerates little teacher laxity.

And to insure against it even further, there is an elaborate system of teacher-proof hall passes. Teachers are not permitted to write hall passes at will; they are issued a small number of disposable hall passes by the principal's office. They are told to use them sparingly. Control over the teachers as well as the students has led to a marked reduction in lateness and class-cutting. The success of this endeavor, however, has depended on the authority and willingness of the principal to insist that teachers comply with the rules. Both teachers and students feel that the enforcement is good for the school and for themselves as individuals.

> Chemistry and math were the first two periods and I used to come in late and miss them both. I missed several whole days of school. Then the teachers talked to me about not cutting. They are concerned. There are rules. Classes start at 7:45, and you're allowed to be up to 15 minutes late. At 8 o'clock the doors are locked. Then you need a parent note to get in or an official note. Absence is a big issue here. (Urban/11th grade girl)

> If you cut three times you are suspended. You can't cut classes in this school. There's nowhere to go. There are two persons at each door. You'd have to be sneaky to get out and I'd be too scared. (Urban/10th grade girl)

> Students used to hang around the yard (instead of going to class). I used to do it too. That all changed my sophomore year; when they changed the rule, I came in . . . . You have to have a hall pass now. I used to hang around the bathrooms during passing. The bathrooms used to be packed with smokers. They'll let you smoke a cigarette, but I don't see no crowds any more. (Urban/11th grade boy)

> Urban is more tightly run than any other school I've been in. I like it. Of course, there's no fighting and most of the important rules are enforced. There's no one wandering the corridors. We're encouraged not to give passes. Teachers don't all enforce it, but it's there. We have official passes on official paper. And they make it difficult for teachers to get them. It works here. If a student is out in the corridor, he'll be grabbed. I would say that discipline is good. (Urban/English)

We have spent this time describing Urban because it represents an example of control that is satisfying for teachers, students and adminis-

trators, and yet is counter to the solution that many schools and communities would adopt. The strength and authority of the administration is used to insure that students are in classrooms where they belong. The school does not assume that students have a choice, nor does the administration fear student retaliation in return for enforcing the rules. (This was a reality in Suburban.) Rather, in Urban the rules are explicit and enforcement is reasonably consistent. As a result, teachers individually have less paperwork keeping track of students, and a greater sense of satisfaction. Although they still do not like to patrol the halls, they know that their efforts are supported by other teachers, by the administrators, and ultimately by the students. Further, administrative control of student attendance allows teachers to focus more of their energy on teaching. It is interesting in fact to realize that Urban is the school in which the departmental structure is strong and in which the administrative structure is strong. They seem to operate in different spheres, however, each supporting and reinforcing the work of the other.

Summary

There is more than could be said about rules, meetings, and procedures related to teachers' non-instructional work. It is an area that gives rise to conflicts in each of the schools, not, as we have seen, as a function of the presence of rules, but rather because of the uncertain role that teachers have in school-wide decision making. It is an area of evolving relationships. When we consider controls on teachers' instructional work, we are concerned with each teacher as an individual. When we move out of the classrooms and into the school as a unit, the uncertain boundaries between departments and roles become obvious, as does the reali-

zation that much of school life does not require that they interact. Meetings, committees, senates, and the necessity of implementing rules for students bring teachers, counselors and administrators together in ways that are unfamiliar to them in their daily routines. Perhaps the absence of rules and procedures and school-wide meetings point out the lack of school-wide connections.

TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Asking school people about teacher evaluation is like asking them about student discipline; the topic generates long histories of abuse, misunderstanding, lack of communication and ineptitude. One comes away with the sense that, like student discipline, the problems endemic to evaluation will remain long after all of us are gone. On the surface, it is difficult to understand the intensity of response. Teacher evaluation occurs rarely and has important consequences for only a fraction of the teachers in any one school. But when one probes a bit deeper, it beomes clear that evaluation evokes memories of the many ambiguities that exist in teachers' work, and of the ways in which evaluation ignores those ambiguities by acting as if teaching were a well-understood body of skills that could be easily measured at a particular point in time. Further, evaluation as a tool of the administrative hierarchy of the school temporarily changes the relationship between the principal and the teachers. Although there are always tensions in the roles, for most of the school year teachers and principals think of each other as colleagues. They do not think of themselves in opposition. Formal evaluation forces teachers and principals to become aware of the authority distinctions between them; principals are in the position of judging rather than supporting their teachers. In addition, both the principal and the teachers are aware that the principal cannot really know what each teacher is doing. There is a discrepancy between what the principal appears to know and what he or she actually knows. Teachers resent being judged on the basis of minimal knowledge; principals as well are dissatisfied with this reality.

Although evaluation is meant to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, at the present time it seems to serve two slightly different functions.[1] First, it is used as the basis for making decisions regarding tenure or dismissal of probationary staff. Second, and related to this first use, evaluation is viewed by administrators and teachers as a way to protect their rights. Administrators see evaluation as a way to document poor teaching in the event that they wish to transfer or dismiss a teacher. Teachers see written evaluation as their protection from arbitrary transfer or dismissal. Evaluation seen in this way further erodes the possibility of collegial support and advice from the principal to the teacher. Teachers and principals seem to act as adversaries in the process. This mitigates against any possibility of the formal evaluation procedure functioning to improve the individual teacher's practice.

In spite of the ambiguities and tensions inherent in teacher evaluation, each school system requires principals to adhere to a highly structured, district-wide evaluation procedure. Each of these has a long and tortured history; none is considered adequate at the present time. Although they differ, each of the procedures involves written accounts, careful records, and face-to-face conversation between teachers and principals. All of the systems require that administrators provide feedback to their teachers; given the limited knowledge that an administrator has about each individual, this feedback often sounds trivial to the teacher. In some of the schools, this appears to result in a baseline

[1] In this study, we have not attempted to address the substantial issues that confront teacher supervision and evaluation. We have avoided questions such as: What is good teaching? What are the criteria on which teachers should be evaluated? Who should do the evaluating? What is the relationship between supervision and evaluation? Instead, we are interested in the way in which the formal evaluation system fits into the organization of each of the schools.

level of cynicism for the entire procedure.[2]

Broadly speaking, there are two basic systems of evaluation: those that rely on classroom observations and those that involve teachers in the development of goals and objectives. These are not pure types, but they provide useful distinctions around which to organize a discussion of teacher evaluation. Regardless of which system a district uses, evaluation seems to have little impact on the quality of teaching. We have found, however, that goal setting systems can have a powerful coordinating function. In those districts that stress articulation between district, school and teacher goals, the process can influence curricula decisions in the school and in the classroom. We begin then with a description of the different systems and continue with a discussion of the ways in which the formal evaluation system relates to the control and coordination of teachers' work.

Descriptions of the Evaluation Systems

History of the classroom observation systems. Administrators in Village, Suburban, and Urban use classroom observations as the basis for evaluating their teachers. In all three schools, the formal systems are new responses to dissatisfaction with the previous systems. Village had used a checklist of teacher qualities and activities. The school board became dissatisfied with this approach.

---

[2]Although most teachers indicated that they do not take evaluation seriously, we feel that these comments mask deep concerns that all schoolpeople share. Data from the five schools indicate that both teachers and administrators do care about the quality of teaching in their schools and have a high regard for those who help teachers improve their practice. Teachers also want real feedback that will tell them whether they are doing a good job, informs them that someone notices and cares when they are, and offers specific advice that they can use. Lack of any acknowledgment, however, seems to be an unpleasant fact of life for many teachers.

> It used to be a checklist and--this is really funny--there were generalities, things like 'the teacher communicates.' No one knew what a check meant or what a check plus meant. Finally, the board said, 'this is nonsense; do something else.' We decided that evaluations should be for growth . . . . I brought in a guy from Northwest Labs and he didn't help us at all. I brought in a guy from NEA and all he cared about was how can you protect teachers. Then I brought in a guy from SRI and he helped us proceed along lines we wanted. (Village/Central Administrator)

The new system, although it is supposed to avoid generalities, focuses the evaluators' attention on broad themes that are difficult to define and locate, for example, rapport, drive, innovation, and activation. Administrators are currently involved in an in-service course designed to help them understand and implement this system that developed in response to a bureaucratic mandate to "do something better about teacher evaluation."

In Suburban, the school board had also become disenchanted with their evaluation system. They wanted a system that increased teacher accountability, and tried to achieve this by tying money to evaluation. The school board developed an evaluation system that included merit raises for teachers; instead of accountability, they got turmoil. The hostility that surrounded the attempts to implement that system during its first and only year still resounds in discussions of evaluation in Suburban today.

> Prior to my coming, the board had agreed and adopted a merit pay system. We were here with the first year of its implementation. It was a traumatic experience. The mere fact that the staff was being seriously evaluated was traumatic. Now they were also evaluated heavily. The merit system was extremely disturbing. (Suburban/ Central Administrator)

> It's a horrendous document we're subject to. It was a personal vendetta of a board member. He thinks we're like (a factory). They were going to see if we were turning out defective engines. How are you going to do that with

> kids? Then there were merit raises for a year. Just like at (the factory). Our negotiators gave that away. Thought we'd get more money because we have excellent teachers here. But when we were evaluated, we were all rated satisfactory. There were no more excellent teachers and no more merit raises. We don't have that anymore. (Suburban/Social Studies)

Currently, the evaluation system is based predominantly on brief classroom observations and the administration views it as a system in transition.

In Urban it was the teachers who became dissatisfied with the old evaluation system. They felt that it was unfair because it allowed the principals too much latitude in making decisions about individual staff members. The teachers' union was successful in limiting the principal's discretion.

> There is no real evaluation these days. There used to be some supervision out of Central Office. Now we only have a biennial rating . . . . It's the unions that wanted the satisfactory and unsatisfactory rating. The union said that the old system was unfair. So now most of the teachers get a satisfactory unless they're really blatant about something. I think there should be a better system because there are good people who are not recognized. But now there is no chance for favorites to be played, and that was a problem with the old system. It used to be the ones who got excellent were in tight with the principal. On the other hand, the present system doesn't point out the bad teachers. (Urban/English)

> It used to be, a while ago, that we had a bell-shaped curve that determined the promotion of people. People used to break their humps. The teachers were claiming it was unfair and too subjective, so it was dropped. (Urban/English)

The impetus for change came from different sources in these schools. In Village and Suburban, it arose from the school board and was a demand for increased control and accountability of the staff. Board members saw greater specificity was a way to achieve this objective and attempted to implement teacher evaluation systems that would clearly define teacher

competencies. In this respect, they were in tune with the current attempts to define student competencies; they sought to simplify the complexities inherent in teaching and learning. Neither school system was able to develop an evaluation system that met these goals. In Urban, the pressure for change came from the teachers and can be interpreted as their demand for greater control and accountability of the administration. It is not clear whether they were successful. Over time, it is not clear that any of the changes has improved evaluation, regardless of one's role in the system. Rather, it seems that the recurrent changes in evaluation systems reflect tensions in the relationship between teacher and administrative authority. Evaluation seems to be one battleground on which the teachers and administrators vie for control of teachers' work.

What is more, the shift to tighter evaluation systems might be interpreted as one of the schools' responses to the cultural beliefs that schools are failing to teach basic skills. With the schools under attack for allowing poor teaching that leaves students unable to read and compute, it is not surprising that school boards would feel compelled to monitor more closely the work that their teachers do. Knowing what to monitor and achieving such a system is difficult; making the attempt is critical, however, for the legitimacy of the school.

The Process of evaluation. Currently, each of these systems relies predominantly on classroom visits as the basis for written reports. In Village and Suburban, these are done by the principal and assistant principal; in Urban, the department chairpeople make monthly visits, although the principal retains the authority to make decisions. Each principal commented on the formal procedure in his school.

> I divided the teachers between (the assistant principal) and me. That means that I do half of the teachers for the first evaluation and then we just change off. We each do one evaluation on a probationary teacher . . . . We visit classes quite a bit, not as much as I'd like but I pop in now and then. Then there's one formal visit where I sit for the hour. Sometimes it's planned and sometimes it's not. (Village/Principal)

> I have to observe all of these teachers. One observation has to be by me and one by the secondary evaluator which is usually (the assistant principal). Their objectives are reviewed and I have to write a six-page report. It ties me up for 30 days. I do it for all positions in the school, not just the teachers. (Suburban/Principal)

> I have a biennial rating that I must submit. It must be based on a classroom visit. I require the monthly visit and written report from the department chairmen. I make one wheel around the school each day and I can tell who's goofing off. In the biennial year, I make at least one and sometimes two visits. Usually my critique is 'excellent.' (Urban/Principal)

Administrators' comments indicate that they are required to spend only a short amount of time in each classroom. When they have a probationary teacher in the school, they must spend more time in formal observation, but the time is still brief. In Urban, for example, a probationary teacher must be observed twice a year, while a tenured teacher is observed once every two years.

> The principal comes in one day and the vice principal comes in one day and that's it. They come in periodically, but that's it. There are four basic broad guides; I don't recall what they are. Mine (the evaluations) have been glowing and I haven't had any criticisms. (Village/Social Studies)

> You're evaluated by two administrators. They come in your room and sit--I don't know--maybe for 20 minutes. They type out an evaluation and have a conference with you. I think they should do more than one visit . . . . I think they get a lot from the kids. (Village/Foreign Language)

> I had three announced observations. She (assistant principal) comes in and sits for 20 minutes and takes notes. Then we have a conference to discuss the teaching and

> also the extracurricular kinds of functions . . . . They make suggestions that we use to write objectives for next year. We have three (objectives) that we discuss with the administration. At the end of the year, we assess the percent of success that we had in meeting the goals. (Suburban/English)
>
> We have advance information about when they're going to come. We can put on an act for them to observe--for the principal and the vice principal. It's phony and there's a lot of paper work involved. But what they see is a show. (It's) just an instrument to show that something's done, but it's through the kids that you really hear things about other teachers. (Suburban/Foreign Language)
>
> (The department chairman) visits. He's supposed to visit once a month and the principal will sit in classes too sometimes. But what the department head says goes. It doesn't have to be a full period, or, if it's someone (he) knows, he'll pop in and take a look. When the principal visits, he likes to look at the plan book and he doesn't usually stay the period. If a teacher is having a problem, he can ask for help and get a lot of help from (the department chairman). (Urban/English)

Given the brief periods of formal observation, it is not surprising that teachers and administrators find the process little more than a bureaucratic formality. They acknowledge, though, that it must be done "for show." Thus teachers are to some extent accomplices in the performance of evaluation. They know that they must be evaluated for the school to be functioning properly.

Each of these systems asks administrators to use a slightly different set of rational criteria when observing their teachers. Village has a set of "teacher themes" that "are to be used as the basis for the narrative statements written on the Teacher Evaluation Form." The narrative must include three paragraphs: "Strengths of the Teacher," "Needs of Opportunities for Improvement," and "Growth or Progress Made by the Teacher This Year." Suburban has an extensive list of criteria that break down into six categories for each of which the principal must in-

dicate whether the teacher is effective, marginal, or unsatisfactory. In addition, the principal must write a paragraph of "suggestions for improvement." Urban's criteria are divided into categories which the principal checks as excellent, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory, and there is also a space for comments. In all of these schools, copies of the evaluations are kept as part of the teachers' permanent record and are sent to central office. In Village, they also go to the school board. Then they are forgotten and the evaluation cycle begins again.

Teachers view these infrequent observations and the written reports as evidence that evaluation is "weak" in their schools. Even in Suburban and Village, which have new evaluation systems that were designed to give greater control to the administration, teachers find their work unaffected. They may not like the new process, but their sentiments are not a function of the direct impact of the evaluation system on their ability to teach. Rather, evaluation seems to be a symbol of the relationship between teachers and administrators. Therefore, it generates strong emotional responses despite the lack of direct control. When evaluation is weak, teachers feel that the administration cares little about them as individuals. On the other hand, when administrators try to evaluate more closely, teachers feel threatened and claim that the complexity and ambiguity of their work is not well understood by those who work outside of classrooms. Underlying both sets of responses is the tension that arises from the knowledge that written evaluations can be used against teachers, coupled with the teachers' real desire for collegial support that will minimize the uncertainties and ambiguities. Teachers want emotional support and they want practical help. Evaluation provides neither of these.

> Teacher evaluation is weak here. I've been here 10 years. I'm evaluated once a year and the new teachers twice. Also the Northwest accreditors come in. But even they don't spend enough time in a classroom or with a teacher to know what's going on. (The assistant principal) was in for 10 minutes and he wrote me a good report, but it doesn't help me with growth. To say I'm overconscientious doesn't help me. I know that. (Village/Foreign Language)
>
> Teacher evaluation--usually it makes you feel good, but I don't think it's very useful. I think the department chairman or a colleague should be involved. (Village/ Social Studies)
>
> The goals of the (state) evaluation law are to better classroom teaching, but it doesn't. I don't think that they (the evaluators) know the methodology of teaching a foreign language and so evaluation isn't very helpful. My composite evaluation says, 'try to be interdisciplinary.' Sure, that's fine. But have you ever tried it? It's logistically impossible. It's like they were looking for something to say. (Suburban/Foreign Language)
>
> (Evaluation)--it's not really useful for classroom instruction. I couldn't see the connection between observations and classroom instruction. But the state requires this (the observation). (Suburban/Assistant Principal)
>
> (The principal and assistant principal) do it and I'm comfortable with the evaluation procedure. I think they do a lot of looking for things to suggest. We laugh about it in the teachers' room. There's a certain amount of direction for writing objectives. And some seem to be punitive, like getting along with parents. (Suburban/Social Studies)
>
> Teacher evaluation is not useful for instruction. We don't have any kind of self evaluation; we're just graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory . . . . I think there's nothing that a teacher has to sign. It used to be, when I was non-tenured, that I signed it, but not now. When (the principal) came around and saw me, I never saw anything. But if it's unsatisfactory, you'd know about it. (Urban/Foreign Language)
>
> The headmaster visits every two years, and he comes in my class and I take the chance to make barbs at him. It's all in fun. If I were unsatisfactory, though, they'd have a hard time proving it in court. (Urban/English)

Teachers' comments confirm the lack of relation between evaluation and their work, yet they also reveal a sense of disappointment. While

there is no doubt that teachers do not want to receive poor, or even equivocal written reports, they indicate that they would like to have some feedback that is relevant to their classroom work. None of the evaluation reports provides this help. Teachers in Suburban, in particular, noted that the attempt to be helpful was irrelevant, demeaning, and the source of much teacher cynicism and annoyance. Administrators too are aware of the effect of suggestions; they respond to the situation differently.

In Village, the principal agreed that the suggestions were a source of tension and said:

> (If I don't have anything important to say) I write that they should keep doing what they're doing. I haven't had any squawks from headquarters about it, so I guess it doesn't matter. (Village/Principal)

Although teachers may still disagree with the principal's suggestions, at least he feels that he has the discretion to decide when to make suggestions. In Suburban, the requirement to make suggestions is interpreted as an imperative. One central administrator commented:

> Since we had to make suggestions, we often came into philosophical differences. I may stress skills in the teaching, but the teacher may be coming from another place, and another philosophy. We don't agree than on suggestions. At the base of the conflict was the fact that teachers were raised in an era of academic freedom. They didn't want anyone coming into their room and telling them how to teach. (Suburban/Central Administrator)

These three evaluation systems seem to be somewhat of an enigma. All are mandated by the local districts and spell out in great detail the procedures and criteria for evaluation. The formal process is fully implemented in each of the schools. Yet teachers and administrators agree that there is little if any direct relationship between the formal evaluation system and the monitoring or control of teachers' work. Further, most teachers in these schools are tenured, and as such, are assured

of continuing contracts unless, as one teacher said, they do something "blatant." The highly formalized procedures seem to have no relation to the activity that they are designed to evaluate. We will return to this puzzle at the end of the chapter.

Goal Setting Systems

The evaluation systems in City and Central are based on an assessment of teachers' goals and objectives. These systems, too, have a history. In Central, as in Urban, it was the teachers who pressed for change. They had complained, through their association, that principals would give teachers poor evaluations without ever having informed the teachers of their dissatisfaction. The teachers pressed for a system that would formalize the evaluation process, and prevent what they saw as arbitrary action. As a result, the district adopted a 'loosely knit management by objectives system.' Under this system, probationary teachers design goals and objectives every year, and continuing teachers write them every three years. This system forces the administrator to meet with all probationary teachers at least twice a year. This had been a major goal of the teachers' association.

City has developed a system that emphasizes coordinating instruction and providing teachers with remedial help rather than evaluation. The rationale and form of this system was described by the principal.

> We used to have on-going evaluation, but it was eliminated. The superintendent said it was demeaning to have a checklist. Now, we have an accountability process. All teachers write objectives, such as 'we will develop a values program,' 'will increase ADA,' 'we'll incorporate ethnic contributions into the curriculum.' These are the types of things about which they write objectives to us and they are passed on to us from the superintendent's office. At the same time, the faculty as a group comes up with goals just for our school.

> By October 1, each teacher now has an accountability interview with me or one of my assistants. Then in May, we meet with them again and I ask them about whether they've met their goals. They tell me and give me some concrete examples of what they've done to meet their goals, and then I know that they're doing their job. (City/Principal)

This accountability process is not, in actuality, an evaluation system; it is a way of coordinating instructional goals across the hierarchy of the school system. Evaluation, which amounts to the identification of inadequate or problematic teachers, is accomplished through informal means: parents, students, other teachers, and administrators call to the principal's attention any teacher who they feel needs assistance. If, after speaking with the teacher, the principal agrees that the teacher does need some supervision, there is a formal remediation committee that convenes and works with the teacher. The goal of this process is to improve the quality of teaching in the district.[2]

In both City and Central then, non-tenured teachers write goals at the beginning of each academic year; tenured teachers write them every two to three years. Goals can be specific to each teacher, but they must also articulate with the broader goals of the district. For example, City and Central are both concerned with improving attendance; teacher goals include a focus on attendance. In City's district, there is a focus on improving reading achievement as measured on standardized tests; this must be reflected in teachers' written goals. Central is expecting

---

[2] The remediation process has another interesting aspect to it. Declining enrollment and the potential for teacher reductions looms large in this district. Therefore, job security is an important issue for teachers. Quality is an important issue for the superintendent. These interests are merged currently in an informal working agreement: the district will not reduce staff due to declining enrollment and in return the Teachers' Association will not grieve any dismissals for cause. The remediation process is one important part of the teachers' assurance that they and their colleagues are given every opportunity to improve their performance prior to any dismissal attempt.

a visit from the regional accrediting agency; teacher goals reflect the agency's emphasis. This articulation is reflected in the principal's earlier comment and in these that follow.

> This is somewhat of a management by objectives system and some people feel that it's a little oppressive and it makes them anxious. But it doesn't make me anxious. Some teachers say, 'I can't get the grade level up from 4.9 to 5.2,' but then they do it and they feel a lot of pride and satisfaction in their job. It's always the teachers who are anxious who end up doing a better job than we expect. (City/Superintendent)

> Now I also have to write up whole department objectives because of the southern evaluation. I had a copy of what the department is going to be checked on by the evaluators and I gave a copy of this report to the teachers and asked them to write up objectives for themselves for the department. Then I will assimilate all of these into some department objectives, and the visiting team will use these to evaluate our department. (Central/English)

These two schools require a tight connection between centrally developed goals and teachers' written goals. But we do not know how these goals are translated into practice. Principals are faced with this dilemma as well, and indicate that it is difficult for them to evaluate the teachers' success in meeting the goals. To ameliorate this problem, both districts rely on conferences in which teachers' self-report is the basis for evaluation.

> Well, in writing objectives, you have to be realistic and say things like, '65% of my students will be good readers at the end of the year.' No one expects you to succeed with all of the students and so the goals and objectives tend to be somewhat general . . . . I don't know what happens to the objectives. I think they go into the permanent file. I don't know if the principal evaluates the achievement of goals. (Central/Foreign Language)

> I develop goals by myself. The goals are handed in at some kind of conference and they go on file. (Central/English)

> In the fall, we have to write up our goals for the year and talk them over with the assistant principal. Then we meet in the spring to talk about how well they've been met. (Central/English)

> We have no measuring device (with which to evaluate teachers). Your hear about teachers from faculty and students, and that's okay with me. (City/English)

> I don't know how we're evaluated. I guess there's a limited evaluation unless there are complaints. (City/Social Studies)

In spite of the articulation of teacher and district goals, there is little overt effort during the year to monitor whether or not the teachers are working toward them. Lesson plans are not checked for their relation to goals; curriculum guides may have nothing to do with goals. However, teachers in both schools expressed the feeling that there was a different emphasis, a different set of expectations, for those goals that articulate with the district and those that teachers design for themselves. They believe that the district goals are important, and say that those goals are the focus of the end of the year evaluation conference. Teachers feel under obligation to account for the ways in which they have worked to achieve those goals. This is a clear example of the way in which beliefs about potential control can have a coordinating effect on teachers' work. Although they are not monitored often, teachers in these two schools say they attempt to meet district goals. Further, teachers in City noted that they would definitely be asked about how they had implemented a unit on ethics; teachers in Central would be asked about their efforts to improve attendance. The goals, then, form a coordinated focus for work. The connection between goals and the quality of instruction, however, is uncertain. Teachers comment that someone would have to observe them teaching in order to know about the quality of their work. Although principals in both schools indicate that they do observe classrooms, teachers report that these visits are too casual to provide any useful information to them or to the administrators.

> They say they come by and observe, but they don't. They pop in and say hello. No one has sat in my class all year. The only time someone came was when I invited a supervisor to come and see a special lesson that I had prepared. (Central/English)
>
> No one from central office ever comes. The principal comes by surprise and stands in the door, but for no more than 10 minutes. (Central/Foreign Language)
>
> I never know except from student tests how I'm doing. I get no feedback at all, and if I were doing a good or a bad job, I wouldn't know. I wish (the principal) would call me in and tell me. I don't know if the administration thinks I'm lousy or good. (City/English)
>
> No one observes. I don't get any feedback at all. At times it concerns me, but it doesn't really bother me. (City/Social Studies)

These comments not only reveal that teachers feel they are not being observed, they suggest that this is a source of disappointment. They would like to have some form of evaluative statement that lets them know where they stand in the eyes of the administration. Considering the teachers' responses to the observation systems that exist in Village, Suburban, and Urban, one might conclude that an evaluation based on classroom observation would fall short of these teachers' expectations. Nonetheless, these teachers, much like those in the other three schools, want to be told how they are doing and how to improve.

Formal evaluation is less of a presence in these two schools. Teachers did not have a great deal to say about the system and their comments lacked the negative emotional tone present in the remarks from teachers in Suburban, in particular. In fact, the word evaluation seems inappropriate. These teachers did not talk about goal setting as part of the evaluation process; they saw it as a way of coordinating and articulating district concerns with their work in school. Further, the difficulty of measuring goal achievement seems to make the evaluation part of

these systems less visible than the coordination that develops. Although the superintendent in City may say that a particular amount of improvement on a standardized test will be a measure of teachers' performance, there are many factors other than the teacher that influence such scores. As a result, failure to meet the goal cannot be evidence of teacher failure. Similarly, attendance goals can be evaluated, but it is difficult to assign blame for failure to achieve the goals. Working toward the goals is more important then ability to achieve them.

Interestingly, although evaluation is less of a presence in these schools, the articulation of teacher, school, and district goals, particularly in City, is a reality. Teachers indicated that not only did they have to write a goal about including minority interests in their curriculum, they had to include that information in their disclosure statements to parents, and they had to include the material in their teaching. Teachers felt that they were expected to do this, and that they would not be fulfilling their obligations if they did not do so. The accountability system, then, at least in City, and perhaps in Central, seems to have a powerful controlling effect on teachers' work. That control, however, is on the content of the work and not necessarily on the quality. What is more, it has this coordinating effect on very particular aspects of the curriculum.

Examining the content of the goals that are considered important reveals that all of them represent issues of concern in the larger community. At the present time, the district places a great deal of emphasis on improving reading scores on standardized tests. Not only is reading success important for the children in elementary grades, it has a direct relation to the success or failure that they will encounter in eighth

grade when they must take a competency test in English. Large numbers of students passing the test will increase the stature of the school system in the eyes of the community. Goals related to reading then are taken seriously at all levels of the school system. District goals and achievements in reading are presented in the Superintendent's annual report to the Board of Education. There is a public commitment and a public demand for accountability by the district around issues of reading improvement.

The same can be said for the goals surrounding the teaching of a unit on ethics. Recently, amidst considerable political conflict and publicity, the local school board passed a motion requiring the teaching of such a unit. Not surprisingly, this is one of the district goals to which teachers must respond. Within the student body at City, there is a vocal group of students and parents who wish to see their cultural heritage represented in the school curriculum. They have publicized their desires in the greater community, using the press and television. Again, the school and the teachers must respond.

It seems then, that goals and objectives are a way of responding to pressures from the community. They are a formal, public way to acknowledge that the community's concerns and interests are being implemented within the schools. But they seem to be more than symbolic accomodations. Teachers say that the administration is serious in wanting these curricular mandates implemented. Even when they do not agree, teachers say they attempt to comply. Goal setting seems to have a strong coordinating and controlling function within this school district.

Locating Teachers with Instructional Problems

We have been presenting data to show that the evaluation systems in each of these schools do not closely monitor the quality of teachers' work. They are inadequate methods by which to identify good or poor teachers. This leads us to two questions: If the evaluation system does not identify quality of teaching, how do administrators become aware of the differences in their staffs? Do the evaluation reports reflect these differences?

Administrators, not surprisingly, are aware of the differences in their staffs. As one teacher in City said, "they may not know about all the poor teachers, but they know about many of them." Further, there are efforts to help teachers improve in all of the schools. Our data suggest that there are informal channels and informal criteria that administrators and teachers use to identify poor teachers.[3] Most of these are well known to those who have spent time in schools. They are common to all five of our schools regardless of the evaluation system that they employ.

In general, administrators rely on feedback from a variety of people within the school as well as from parents (although serious parent complaints may be an indication that the principal's internal channels of communication are faulty). Principals ask their department chairpeople directly to report on the teachers in their departments.

> Well, the principal and the assistant principal ask me how the teachers are doing, if there are any problems. When I go up and down the halls delivering supplies, I can see what's going on. (Central/English)

> I get an idea of who's doing his job. I hear noise and I don't see any meaningful activity. Also, kids complain.

---

[3]There is virtually no effort to identify and comment on excellent teachers. The emphasis is on negative qualities. This may help explain why most teachers get no feedback at all. In schools, it seems that 'no news is good news.'

> At the end of the year I tell (the assistant principal) which teachers have done an outstanding job. I don't have any criteria. It just comes down to me. (City/ English)[4]

Although department chairpeople are a legitimate source of information, it is worth noting that at times they find their role as informant problematic. Most of the time they consider themselves to be equal with the teachers in their department. (With the exception of Urban, they do not have a formal role in evaluation.) Acting as an informant, therefore, can jeopardize the chairperson's position with his colleagues. At the same time, the chairperson is a valuable source of information, and has a direct interest in maintaining standards in his or her department. The chairpeople suggested in indirect ways that they had ambivalent feelings about their informal role in evaluation.

Teachers say that they become aware of those who are inadequate not only from noisy classrooms, but from department meetings. Those who do not contribute to departmental discussions are considered unprepared and therefore poor teachers. In addition, teachers who consistently pass students who arrive unprepared for the next class are singled out as poor. Generally by word of mouth, through informal channels, this information makes its way back to the administration.

---

[4]Teachers found it difficult to talk about the ways in which they knew that others were inadequate. They were often unable to articulate the substance of their knowledge. This is not surprising. We expect that teachers have a mental conception of what a teacher is and what a teacher does that is good teaching. Not all of this knowledge is verbal. It is learned over the course of years; first by being a student, and then by socialization in to the world of teaching. Thus, we know that this kind of information would be researched better using ethnographic methods other than formal interviews. Therefore, methodological constraints severely limit the understanding of informal knowledge that we present in this section. We consider the section as a superficial glance at the body of understandings that teachers share about teaching.

Then, there are the students themselves. The principal in Village noted if a teacher doesn't teach, the students will complain. This news is apt to come from a parent. In Central, one student told the story of the band director who was new to the school. She and other students felt that he was not doing his job--"he's just as smart as last year's, but can't get it across to the students. There's not enough discipline." This problem led to a group of students and parents meeting and going to speak to the principal. Thus, the principal became aware of a potentially inadequate teacher in his school. He began to attend band rehearsals to monitor the teacher's behavior. All teachers indicate that they get a sense of the other teachers in the school from the students, although they qualify the amount of faith that they place in student evaluations.

Administrators also gather information directly. When they walk around the school, they notice what appears to them to be teaching. They note whether a teacher is late to a class, whether the class appears orderly, and whether learning seems to be going on. They add this to their other sources of information.

> I visit classes informally. I love to cover classes and, teachers sometimes ask me to do this. I find out a lot from the kids and I keep records on those who need help only . . . . Department chairmen don't have a role unless we ask them particular questions about teachers . . . . I also hear because students go to counselors and complain and then the counselors complain to me and then I visit the classroom. (City/Assistant Principal)

> Some teachers really do improve; they have complete turnabouts, especially first year teachers . . . . If a teacher doesn't do a good job the kids will run him out. The discipline! They'll make it so bad that he'll quit. The kids are academically oriented and you have to know that the teacher is doing his job in this system. (Village/Principal)

One administrator reported hearing a teacher using inappropriate language on one of his walks around the school. He took the opportunity to speak to that teacher, and made a point of passing that teacher's classes more frequently. One gets the sense that all of these sources of information help alert the administration to possible sources of trouble in the system.

Once a teacher is identified as having a problem, all of the schools provide some opportunities for assistance. In City, this is a formal, complicated process that involves a considerable commitment of time and personnel for each teacher identified as needing help. In the other schools the process is more informal.

> One of the teachers in the middle school is having a lot of trouble. He's a new phys ed teacher but he also teaches Social Studies. I help him on how to make study guides. I show him how to do other things besides the questions at the end of the chapter. (Village/Assistant Principal)

It is at the point at which a teacher is identified as needing help that the formal evaluation system emerges as important. While it was not needed to locate and identify poor teaching, the evaluation system now provides the formal documentation of teaching that was identified as problematic through informal means. This is an important protective measure for the teacher, the school, and the district.

Evaluation as Documentation

In part as a function of the times, administrators comment that it is very difficult for them to dismiss a teacher who they feel is inadequate. They note that the due process requirements tie them up for extended periods of time, and that in the end they may only be successful

in transferring the teacher to another building. This is considered as much of a problem in Village, which has a new evaluation system designed to increase central control, as it is in Urban or Central, where there have been efforts to limit central control. Because they find it so difficult and onerous a task, principals report that they prefer to counsel or coax poor teachers out of the profession. Teachers help in this process.

> We've had some lousy teachers. They leave. It's sort of an informal ostracizing. No one talks to them; we have nothing in common and nothing to say anyway. They leave. But there are some poor teachers who have turned around. (Village/Social Studies)

> I would have a conference with the principal about an incompetent teacher, with the teacher. I'd suggest an extended leave or an early retirement. The principal is good; he plucks them right out. (Urban/Social Studies)

> We had one last year and we got him to retire, but we did it all for him. We filled out the forms and did all the paperwork, and all he had to do was sign. It's a built-in safeguard too, though. (Urban/Principal)

There are indications that when these methods do not work, then transfer is more likely than dismissal. In Suburban, there have been transfers between the junior and senior high schools and within the high school itself when teachers have had instructional difficulties. In City, transfers are also used and one administrator alluded to the feelings of principals who receive other principals' transfers.

> Principals are dismayed when they don't have a choice in the teacher who is being transferred in. They call me and say, 'don't give us one of your cast-offs.' But all I can say is that the principals are kept advised, but they don't have any authority in making the decision. (City/Central Administrator)

Whether inadequate teaching will result in a transfer or a dismissal, principals must carefully document a teacher's difficulties and the ef-

forts that the school has taken to help the teacher improve. It is in this way that the evaluation is used; it provides the form of the documentation.

> If a teacher's unsatisfactory, I must document why very carefully. While they're still non-tenured, I must visit four times and the district superintendent visits four times and more if necessary. We have constructive criticism type meetings. If I rate anyone unsatisfactory, I must visit once a month until they're satisfactory. The teacher must sign the report. At the moment I have only one provisional teacher and he is unsatisfactory and we won't see him next year. But he may be hired again in another school . . . . I worked with him on a demonstration lesson, but he hasn't been able to pick it up. I have to move heaven and earth if I want to fire (a teacher). (Urban/Principal)

> We're looking for quality. We're looking for a basis not to continue someone. Also, it's a way of documenting the way we've tried to help them (teachers). We make recomendations about what should be done to bring teachers up to the the relative norm. (Suburban/Principal)

> We really need to document it a lot if a teacher needs improvement. We visit a lot and if it doesn't improve, then we try to phase them out. In most cases we've been able to counsel them out. I've never had to go to the board with a request to dismiss a teacher. (Village/Principal)

> (We have to be able to say) 'look, we've broken our necks to help him succeed and it just hasn't worked.' (Central/Central Administrator)

Evaluation is the way to document two issues over time, 1) that a teacher has been seriously lacking in some aspect of performance, and 2) that the district has been serious in its efforts to help that teacher. Both types of documentation are necessary if a school system is going to attempt to dismiss a teacher. However, as the comments also suggest, even with careful documentation, school systems prefer to avoid lengthy, unpleasant, and uncertain dismissal procedures. They prefer to coax the teacher out of the profession or encourage an early retirement. When that fails, they are likely to attempt to give the teacher another chance

through a transfer.

Although the comments reported have stressed the ways in which the administration uses formal evaluation, it is important to remember that the system also operates as a safeguard for teachers. Careful documentation and legitimate attempts to help protect teachers from dismissal without cause. In Central, arbitrary action on the part of administrators was the impetus for teachers to lobby for a new, more formal evaluation system. In Urban it was instances in which the administrators 'played favorites' that helped spur their effort for less administrative discretion and more formality in the evaluation process.

Summary

Teacher evaluation is a misnomer. In spite of the formal appearance of the evaluation systems, they neither provide evaluations of the quality of a teacher's work, nor do they inform the administration about whether a teacher always uses the required text or is teaching the appropriate curriculum. Although it is close and personal in some respects, the lack of frequency and the tangential relation to everyday life in classrooms makes evaluation a poor mechanism with which to control and coordinate teachers' work. Within these five schools, we suggest that the systems that are the most formalized and structured, the classroom observation systems in Suburban and Village, for example, are in fact least useful for evaluating teachers' work. Evaluation requires a process, an on-going assessment that begins where a teacher is and charts the course of future work. These observational evaluation systems capture brief points in time. The goal-setting evaluation systems used in Central and City could be on-going evaluations, but this potential is not realized. Administra-

tors and teachers assess their success in meeting goals annually at best.

However, to the extent that teachers write their goals in accordance with those developed in the district and the school, we have seen that the goal-setting evaluation systems can function to coordinate and focus teachers' attention on specific aspects of the curriculum. They are not, however, evaluation systems; they do not monitor the work that teachers do.

This leaves us with the puzzle that we described earlier in the chapter. If these formal systems do not actually result in evaluation of teachers' work, why are they so elaborated and carefully implemented in each of the schools? We suggest that teacher evaluation, given the structure of high schools, is in fact difficult to accomplish. Not only does the isolation of the individual teacher in the classroom make on-going evaluation difficult; criteria and standards of good practice are not obvious. Further, schools are not staffed with people who can spend enough time with teachers to make evaluation meaningful. Yet, in spite of these constraints, there is a need to assess teachers' work, and this responsibility falls to the administration. The evaluation systems, then, develop out of a genuine desire to evaluate teachers and provide quality teaching, and out of the pragmatic need to have a system of evaluation. Schools would seem irresponsible if they did not have formal evaluation systems. In some states it is illegal not to have such a system. Therefore, school systems comply with the pressure to evaluate teachers. In these five schools, it appears that the greater the public pressure, the more elaborate and detailed will be the evaluation process that is developed. We cite the examples of Village and Suburban in support of this hypothesis.

It is also important to remember that evaluation does have an impor-

tant role to play in documenting teaching. It is the formal record of teachers' performance and of the schools' attempts to improve that performance. As documentation, evaluation is important in preserving the school's authority to dismiss incompetent teachers. Similarly, it is important to the individual teacher as protection against arbitrary dismissal. We suspect that in the context of declining enrollment and potential teacher lay-offs, teacher evaluation may increasingly become the focus of teacher/administrator conflict.

CONCLUSION

We have described in detail the control and coordination of a great many aspects of teachers' work in high schools. Beginning with their assignment to classes and ending with the evaluation of their work, we have considered both the role of the formal structure and the participation and activity that accomplish the various tasks. We have seen that the formal structure sets limits on the teachers' autonomy; and we have seen that teachers can exercise considerable discretion within the boundaries defined by the structure. We have also seen that there are many controls that originate outside of the formal structure of the school. We have been stressing multiple perspectives and variation; now it is time to shift our focus back to the methodological origins of this study and compare our findings with those of High School '77. To do this, we must limit our discussion to those issues that relate to high school principals.

On the whole, the data that we have collected support the findings generated by the survey of high school principals as well as the growing body of literature that seeks to reinterpret the role of bureaucratic school structure in less mechanistic terms. Principals and teachers agree that the principal plays many roles. All of the principals were involved to some extent in curriculum issues; all had an important role to play in presenting the school to the community and responding to community pressures; and all managed their schools, controlling the allocation of time and students within the constraints of the bureaucratic structure. All five principals exercised considerable discretion in decision making, and they did not rely predominantly on rules when making those decisions. Nor did they necessarily have explicit criteria for decision making.

Instead, many decisions were made on an ad hoc basis; a teacher came in with an idea and the principal responded depending on his assessment of the individual and the issue.

It is also clear that regardless of the principal's actual involvement in each of these areas, teachers see him differently depending on their parochial interests. If the principal supports curriculum in their department, then they describe him as a principal who supports curriculum; if he supports it in another department, teachers doubt that he is interested in curriculum. The different perspectives suggest that the principal retains considerable personal discretion to allocate his time and attention. It also points up the competitive relationships between departments.

When we consider participation in decision making, again we agree with the findings of High School '77, but we need to clarify those findings. We have seen that participation in decision making on instructional issues is widespread within departments, although departmental status seriously constrains some teachers' ability to influence their work. When we consider school-wide issues, teacher participation is more problematic. In all of the schools teachers report participation, but not necessarily influence. They feel that the administration of the school controls their ability to influence decisions. In some schools there is an imbalance between participation and influence. When the difference between the two is great, as in Suburban, teachers become cynical and feel they are being used. Where participation and influence are informal and equal, as in Village, teachers describe a sense of efficacy. It is important also to remember that participation and satisfaction do not necessarily vary together. In Urban, for example, teachers participate and

influence curriculum decisions, but they respond to administrative decisions regarding control of students. This division is satisfactory and teachers are not asking to participate in the administrative sphere. We have also seen that attempts to involve teachers in school-wide decision making reveal the teachers' discomfort with such participation. The teachers' individualistic orientation does not mesh with the school-wide perspective necessary for these decisions. Further, such participation takes time and energy that teachers would rather spend on classroom matters.

The survey reported that schools emphasize diversity and basics; our findings are in disagreement with this result. There is an overwhelming emphasis on basics and only a minimal stress on diversity in these five schools. This discrepancy may be a function of the way in which the survey question was phrased: the survey asked principals to indicate the courses that are offered in their schools. There is a distinct difference between what is offered and what is taught. This difference does not reveal the schools' attempt to be deceptive; it reflects the reality of the influence of student choices on course options. Courses may be offered, but if students don't choose them, they are not taught. It is also possible that the discrepancy is a function of the sample of schools that we studied or of the passage of time. In the two years that passed between the survey and this field work, there may well have been substantial shifts in the courses that schools offer. Further, it is important not to confuse a large array of courses with student choice. Some of the schools, City for example, offer three different English courses at each grade level. Students, however, have no choice; they are placed in the classes on the basis of their achievement.

Not surprisingly, open ended interviews provided more detail than did the survey. Our data capture the unique features of each school and detail the ways in which the structure and the issues interact. The survey gives us an overview; our data detail the specifics. This is an important difference. If we want to understand high school organization in an effort to change and improve schools, or to make them more responsive to students' needs, then we need to know the individual schools. It is not enough to know generally that principals emphasize all three aspects of their role; in any particular school we need to know how that principal interprets his role. The survey was unable to capture the different ways in which the principal actually functions in relation, for example, to the individual departments. We have shown that the principal does not hold all departments to be equal. Again, this kind of information is necessary in attempting to predict the effect of policy on individual schools. We have seen a school (Suburban) in which the principal stresses his community ambassador role; this has had negative consequences for staff morale. We have also seen a school (Urban) in which the principal emphasizes his managerial control over the teachers in regard to control of students; this has positive consequences for staff morale.

Our old images of school bureaucracy are inappropriate. They lead us to expect an impenetrable, non-responsive structure, while in reality schools have always responded to people and ideas current in the communities in which they exist. This responsiveness is still a reality today. In spite of the size and complexity of some of the schools, they are remarkably sensitive to the pressures of a great many constituencies. This suggests that the bureaucratic structure is a framework that is rigid and yet permeable; changes can alter a department or a teacher without chang-

ing the basic shape of the structure. What is more, we have seen that the boundaries are sensitive to and permeated by all manner of stimuli, at all levels and from multiple sources. If a bureaucratic school must be characterized by a functioning, dominant authority hierarchy, centralized decision making, clear and enforced rules, limited participation, tight coordination among divisions, and close evaluation of work, then these schools are not bureaucracies.

At the outset, we suggested that the bureaucratic structure serves as the framework, establishing the boundaries within which schooling takes place. As a framework, the structure not only serves to shape the arenas for decision making, it stands as the symbol of schooling. The presence of the bureaucratic structure and its formal control and coordination mechanisms signify a school. Given this cultural definition, the structure then has a powerful role to play in maintaining the integrity of the institution.

APPENDIX: Design of the Study

During the 1978-1979 school year, we visited each of five high schools for a period of four to five days. Using open-ended interview guides, we spoke with 25 to 30 people representing school building and central office administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and students. In addition to the interviews, we collected documents, such as student and teacher handbooks and course selection guides. Given the limited amount of time we spent at each school and the heavy interview schedule, we were unable to plan any systematic observation of school activity. However, we took advantage of being in the schools to record "transient" observations related to our research agenda.

In this section of the report, we present an overview of the design and methodology of the study. First, we take the reader through our rationale for school, department, and respondent selection. Then we describe the interview methodology and the nature of the documents collected. We conclude with a detailed account of the research issues that we selected.

Selecting the Sites

Even though this was a small study, we wanted to sample schools that included a range of the characteristics found in American high schools. We wanted schools in different parts of the country that were of different sizes, that had students with a variety of personal characteristics, and that were both urban and suburban. Our sample of five schools encompasses many of these characteristics.

Three of the schools, City, Central, and Urban, are city schools located, respectively, in the West, the Southwest, and the East. City has a student population that is predominantly Caucasian, with noticeable minorities

of Black and Chicano students. Central has a student body that is predominantly Chicano, and Urban has a population that is predominantly Black. Teachers in all schools were overwhelmingly Caucasian. One principal was Chicano, and one assistant principal was a woman. The remaining administrators were Caucasian men. The three schools vary in size, with City and Central each housing about 1700 students, and Urban housing just over 900. The two remaining schools, Suburban and Village, are smaller suburban schools located in the East and the West. Each has a population of about 500 students who are predominantly Caucasian.

We felt that student body composition and school size were particularly relevant to this study. Student body composition relates to the issues of meeting individual student needs through course and program diversity. More heterogeneous schools might need more comprehensive programs to serve all students. Size relates to the potential presence of bureaucratic structures in both the school and the district. One would expect larger districts to have more formal bureaucratic structures to which local schools have to respond. Size also affects program diversity: one would expect larger schools to provide more comprehensive programs.

In addition to these demographic features, all of the schools selected participated in the original survey of high school principals. We did not have access to those data; however, the hope was that at some point it would be possible to compare the three sets of data: those from the original survey, our field method data, and a set generated by a second survey of high school personnel that was made during the 1978-1979 school year.

Finally, we wanted schools in which the principal had been in that position for at least one year. We felt that it would be difficult to research participation, influence, and power in a school in which the prin-

cipal was new and the organization, therefore, likely to be evolving. We were successful in meeting this last criterion in four out of the five schools.

We had no other knowledge of the schools when making our decisions; however, there was a potential for bias in two of the districts. In the districts where Central and Urban are located, more than one high school had been involved in the survey of principals. We attempted to gain access to any one of those schools, as all of them met our selection criteria. The superintendent of schools made the actual site selection for us and we have no way of knowing what criteria may have influenced that selection. Both schools, Central and Urban, were remarkably free of disciplinary problems, but we do not know that this was the reason for their selection. In the three remaining districts, we selected the schools.

We developed our final sample, then, through a process in which we matched the schools in the original study with those in the follow-up study, taking into consideration the demographic variables that we considered important. Although the sample is small and cannot be considered fully representative of all high schools, it is a diverse group of schools and gives us the advantage of considering school organization in a variety of contexts.

Selecting the Departments

Given the broad scope of the research issues and the limited time available in each school, we were faced with the danger of attempting to develop such a comprehensive picture of high school organization that we were unable to describe any one aspect in detail. We concluded that it would be preferable to know two or three key departments in detail, rather than all of them superficially. We focussed on three academic departments

that occupy slightly different positions in the schools.

We selected the English department because it is of major significance to any high school: all students are required to take at least three years of English. In addition, English departments are in the spotlight in much of the discussion on basic education. They are key to an understanding of the schools' responses to competing curriculum demands. English departments had met the cry for relevance in years past by providing an array of course options. There were courses in novel, short story, science fiction, and fantasy, for example, often in place of courses with more mundane titles, such as grammar and composition. We were interested, then, in the fate of these myriad English courses. In addition, English departments have multiple sections of the same course taught by different teachers. This is an ideal setting in which to investigate coordination of instruction across teachers. Further, there is the potential to investigate sequential coordination in a department with many required courses.

We selected the Social Studies department because it, too, is basic to a high school; but it occupies a slightly different position in the school than does the English department. The Social Studies department generally has only two required courses. We assumed that by virtue of this smaller number of required courses, the Social Studies department might have a slightly lower status than the English department. We felt that this difference in status might influence the kinds of participation, influence, and power that members of each department described. In addition, in times of increasing demand for English and Math, a department like Social Studies might be feeling the pinch of limited resources from the administration. Our sense was that the situation of stress might allow us insight into the organization of both the department and of the school.

The last department that we chose was the Foreign Language department. Although some schools require two years of a foreign language for all students in an academic program, the department's courses are, by and large, electives. Thus, we thought that this department might be less tightly controlled than the other two departments even in a school where there was tight coordination and control in the English and Social Studies departments. Further, we felt that it would be a department in some degree of jeopardy due to declining enrollment, decreased budgets, and an emphasis toward basics. We were interested, then, in the power, participation, and influence of teachers in a department of elective courses. We wondered whether teachers in this department have less influence than those in the other two departments. On the other hand, we wondered whether there might be pressure to retain and support the Foreign Language department because it has symbolic importance in the definition of a high school. We wondered how teachers in an all-elective department respond to increased basic requirements which, effectively, take students away from them.

Our purpose in selecting these departments was to get views of the school from departmental perspectives as well as role perspectives. The department structure is an obvious, significant bureaucratic feature of high schools that divides teachers into subject-matter administrative units. These divisions along subject-matter lines may influence status and power in the schools, and we wanted an opportunity to investigate this possibility.

Selecting the Respondents

In each site, we arranged to interview the following array of individuals:

- Superintendent of schools

- Assistant Superintendent responsible for personnel
- Assistant Superintendent responsible for curriculum
- Building Principal and Assistant Principal(s)
- Department Chairperson from each of the departments sampled
- Three Teachers from each of the departments sampled
- The Head of Guidance and two Counselors
- Eight Students

In all, we interviewed 136 individuals. Since there is only one person who holds each of the administrative positions, there were no criteria other than role occupancy for selecting these individuals. The same is true for the department chairpeople and the head of the guidance office.

We requested a range of teachers from each department, asking for teachers who had been in the school for varying amounts of time. We reasoned that a teacher who is relatively new to the school might be most aware of the rules, procedures, and expectations that the school impresses on its teachers. A new teacher would be in the process of finding out how to do things, and might be more likely to wonder about or question the organization. This teacher might have a previous position with which to compare the present school, or might be a novice trying to cope with the formal structure as well as the demands of teaching.

A more experienced teacher would be familiar with the procedures and rules and be able to report on actual experiences in attempting to order materials, counsel students, or influence his/her teaching assignment. An experienced teacher would also have first hand knowledge regarding changes in the course offerings that might be related to issues of diversity and basics. Finally, more experienced teachers would have taught a variety of courses, both elective and required, and might be able to compare the

control and coordination of the different types of courses.

We were reasonably successful in interviewing teachers who met these criteria in all of the schools. There were, however, two limitations to the selection process. First, in the smaller schools, we often interviewed an entire department by requesting the department head and three teachers. In one case, there were only two teachers in the department. Second, in the larger school, we had to rely on an administrator to select the teachers and this leaves us open to issues of bias.

Building principals reported notifying all teachers in a department about the impending research and then reported either selecting respondents or asking for volunteers. In the case of principal selection, we cannot know the criteria that were used, and it is possible that principals selected teachers who would portray the school in a favorable light. While we cannot rule out this possibility, there is evidence that its effect, if present, was minimal. In each of the schools, we interviewed teachers who were critical of some aspect of the school. Teachers did not paint a uniformly rosy picture of the schools. In addition, we interviewed some teachers who had been picked because they had some serious dissatisfaction with the school. Administrators did not seem concerned that these dissatisfactions be aired and seemed cognizant of them. We also interviewed teachers who were hostile to the process and felt they had been coerced into participating. These factors tend to minimize the effects of principal bias in the selection process, although potential bias does exist. Finally, we do not know what teachers in departments other than those we selected would have reported and, therefore, cannot generalize from our findings.

In each school, we spoke with eight students, a boy and a girl from

each grade. Although the number of students represented is not proportional to the number of teachers and administrators, we felt strongly that a study of high school organization could not omit the voices of students. Therefore, although we did not have the resources with which to interview a representative sample of students, we felt it was important to include at least some. The students were selected either by the guidance counselors or by the building principal. We requested "average" students--not the best or the worst--and when possible, students who came from both the academic and general programs, as well as those who had had some difficulty with rules and regulations. We feel that there was an understandable bias on the part of some of the counselors and administrators to select their "prize" pupils (this did not always mean the academically gifted, but those who had made some excellent use of the school or contributions to it), and this again lends bias to the findings. However, across the sample of schools, we did speak with a wide variety of students, and their perceptions of the process of course selection and the use of rules and regulations added to our understanding of the organization of the schools.

Research Issues

We had several criteria in mind when we chose the research issues for this study. First, we wanted research issues that reflected our concern with control of teachers' instructional work. Discussions of and research on control and coordination of teachers' work often conclude that teachers have considerable autonomy in the classroom. The lack of close supervision or monitoring of teachers' work is taken as evidence that the schools are loosely organized. But there are suggestions that the appearance of minimal control is deceptive; that many decisions made at a distance from the individual teacher do effectively limit that teacher's options. These

prior restraints (Corwin, 1976) suggest that the range of options open to teachers might be quite limited, even though they may exercise considerable autonomy within the range that does exist (Lortie, 1975). With these different notions of autonomy in mind, we selected issues that involve the formal structure of the school, require frequent decisions, and are important to an understanding of control of teachers' actual work.

Second, we wanted issues that related to students' choices. In part, this focus grew out of the previous research, but it also came from a basic concern with the ways in which schools are responsive to students' needs and the competing pressures of diversity and basics. Third, we wanted issues that were explicitly expressed in the formal bureaucratic structure of the school. This would give us the opportunity to determine whether the structure was fulfilling its formal purposes. If it were not, we would have an opportunity to question what the structure was doing. Fourth, we wanted issues in which it would be feasible to get information on participation and decision making. We wanted, in other words, issues with which participants in a variety of roles had some knowledge and involvement; we did not want issues that were limited to one role position in the school. Finally, we wanted issues that were closely tied to, although not necessarily identical with, some of the issues researched in the survey of principals. This would facilitate the comparison of results using different methodologies. With these criteria in mind, we selected the following research issues.

Teacher Assignment. If teachers have autonomy over their work, one would expect them to have some degree of influence over the courses that they teach. We wanted to know: How are these assignment choices made?

Who makes them? What are the criteria for making them? What is the role of the teachers and the principal in making these assignment decisions?

Intimately connected with assignment is the actual range of courses offered in a school. If there were few courses offered and these are determined by the administrator, then teachers' options will effectively be limited. We were interested, then, in considering the multiple factors that determine the courses that will be offered. Further, in schools today, there may be a tension between pressures for diverse course offerings and an emphasis on basic skills. Therefore, we asked about the impetus for any changes in course offerings and about the participation of various schoolpeople in those changes. We expected that this information would provide us with a basis for inferring the schools' responses to the demands for diversity and basic skills.[1]

Finally, we were interested in the relationship between the array of courses, the assignment of students to those courses, and the effect of both of these events on teacher assignment. What is the range of decision-making authority that students have? How are students' choices related to teacher assignment?

Rules and Regulations for Teachers. In addition to controlling teacher assignment, the formal organization has the potential to use a

---

[1] One caveat is necessary at this point. We were not studying what teachers do when they are in their classrooms. Therefore, we do not know whether the changes in course offerings are more than changes in the titles of courses. In other words, if a school has eliminated the courses in History of the Novel and Short Story, we do not know whether the new course, called English 12, contains the contents of the previous two courses. We do not know whether a title change signifies more than a reorganization of the former curriculum content. In those schools in which course changes had occurred, teachers said the content of the curriculum had also changed in some cases. We did not collect any direct evidence on this issue.

variety of rules and regulations to coordinate teachers work. We considered textbook adoption procedures, lesson plans, and curriculum guides as examples of these formal rules and regulations. High school principals reported that these mechanisms play a minor role in coordinating instruction; we felt that these prevalent features of schools deserved a closer examination with an interview methodology. In addition, we were interested in whether teachers, themselves, seek to coordinate their work by articulating their classes with one another. We were interested, for example, in the extent to which different teachers who teach sections of the same English course feel pressure or a desire to teach that course in the same way or with the same materials. We were interested in the extent to which there was agreement among teachers that a ninth-grade English course ought to be the same for all students. We were interested also in the source of those agreements. We asked: What is the source of the pressure to coordinate? Is it a teacher decision? Is it a decision based on a directive from the principal or the district? Which mechanisms develop coordination?

Beyond instructional work, there are rules and procedures that are designed to help keep track of students. While these do not control teachers' instructional work, they do have an impact on teachers' lives in schools: they require considerable teacher time, they are of dubious value, and they generate much emotion. We chose to focus on rules and procedures related to absenteeism and student discipline in each of the schools in order to understand the patterns of participation in the development and implementation of rules for students, and their impact on teachers.

Teacher Evaluation. Teacher evaluation is a formal, public commitment by a school system to monitor and evaluate the work of its teachers

in an attempt to provide quality instruction for the students. Yet there is a pervasive belief that evaluation serves no such purpose because it is unclear 1) what the evaluation criteria should be, 2) who should do the evaluating, and 3) what to do with teachers who don't seem to be meeting the criteria. Particularly at the high school level, teachers argue that administrators unfamiliar with their discipline are unqualified to evaluate their work. The formal hierarchy generally places an administrator in that position, although high school principals report spending little time formally evaluating teachers. We were interested, then, in further exploring the issue of teacher evaluation to determine, first whether the formal process is used to evaluate teachers; second, if it is not, whether there is another evaluation mechanisms; and third, if it is not used for evaluation, whether the formal process is used for something else. We also asked whether evaluation was tied to accomplishment of those goals and objectives, which district personnel described as important. Finally, we wanted to know whether the evaluation system serves as a constraint or control on teachers' instructional work.

Overview. Taken together, these research issues focus on the key instructional issues for teachers and students as members of the school organization. They concern a variety of places where the individual and the organization interface, providing us with rich sources of data with which to address our questions. They also are issues that have been the subject of interest to those theorists who have been questioning the propriety of using bureaucratic models to explain school organization. Those who consider schools as loosely coupled organizations point to the lack of coordination between parts of the school, and suggest that the formal structure has important symbolic as well as controlling purposes.

They consider that activities, such as the formal text selection process or formal teacher evaluation, are rituals that have symbolic value but do not coordinate and control teacher work. Thus, by selecting these particular research issues, we will have data with which to address our own questions, as well as some alternative conceptions of school organization.

REFERENCES

Abramowitz, S., Tenenbaum, E., Deal, T.E., & Stackhouse, E.A. High school '77: A survey of public secondary school principals. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education, December 1978.

Blumer, H. Symbolic interaction: Perspective and method. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969, chap. 3.

Corwin, R.G. Organizations as loosely coupled systems: Evolution of a perspective. Preliminary draft of a paper prepared for Seminar on Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems, Palo Alto, California, November 1976.

Lortie, D.C. Schoolteacher: A sociological study. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1975.

Meyer, J.W. & Rowan, B. Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. Manuscript submitted for publication, Stanford University, Department of Sociology, March 1977.